

Peter Redgrove

However, Dunn's substantive views on this problem, interesting though they are, are not the centre of gravity of this volume, which is primarily concerned to give an account of the Soviet debate. This is a very praiseworthy enterprise. Discussions among historians and anthropologists are vigorous and substantial, and do enable us to get at least a partial picture of current Soviet intellectual life and preoccupations. In Dunn's view, the pre-history, so to speak, of the revival of the AMP, started quietly after the last war, not as an overt affirmation of the Aryan, but as a search for a new basis for the notion of a generic slave-owning society which had been intended to absorb both classical society and the pre-Hellenistic Near East. Finally, "in the latter half of the 1950s, the slaveholding interpretation of ancient Eastern society was progressively undermined without being formally repudiated. Nevertheless, "From the end of the Second World War until the late 1950s, the Soviet archaeological knowledge, refers to the social order of the ancient Near East as anything other than slaveholding. . . . The debate emerged into the open, says Dunn, at the Seventh International Congress of

Anthropological and Ethnographic Sciences, held in Moscow in the summer of 1964. The triggering mechanism were papers by the French Marxists Suret-Canale and Godelier, circulated by persons unknown, says Dunn, in the physical absence of their authors. Dunn remarks that he has not been able to discover who did the circulating.

I was present at this Congress, little knowing that I was taking part in history, and if my recollection is correct, there was no mystery whatsoever about the French papers in question which were on the menu of the Congress and were circulated like all other papers. I could clearly feel a certain excitement in the air, and there was marked disappointment when, at the last moment, participants discovered that the authors had not turned up and that consequently these papers would not be read and discussed. There was, however, no difficulty for foreigners in getting their papers included in the very extensive programme. One active, determined and uncompromising student of Wittfogel's, the late Helen Constan, was present at the Congress and did not read her paper, and insisted on her share of time on the platform and on the right to spell out (locally) heterodox views, which resulted in an extraordinary scene between her and (presumably) a local person, wrestling on the floor for control of the microphone. I cannot be sure now whether Constan overstepped the limits of time or of tolerance. No physical damage was suffered by anyone, however.

The Congress was also memorable for a remarkable lecture by Professor Meyer Fortes on L. H. Morgan. Fortes said, in effect, that Morgan was a splendid fellow, who would deserve full acceptance from the best contemporary structural-functional anthropologists, if only we rid ourselves of the nineteenth-century evolutionary blinkers which his time has imposed on him. These are not Fortes's own words but my recollection of the general spirit of his argument. Later, Fortes published this lecture in *Kinship and the Social Order* (1969). The Russians by and large seemed to miss the nuance, but immediately noticed the contention that Morgan was a fine fellow, a view to which they were and were warmly committed, as were Marx and Engels. Long before Fortes had even finished speaking, excited photographers appeared from under the floorboards to record the historic scene in which the head of the Cambridge *Kufedra* had come over to the Soviet cause, and Fortes was much lionized. It seems that the Russians thought they had anthropologically subdued the West, at the very moment when, if Dunn is right, the West had quietly started them.

If the overt debate started in 1964, Dunn says that it "essentially closed" in 1975. This, like his assertion that the neo-Azitchik won in all but terminology, may be an exaggeration. In 1975, there appeared in Moscow V. N. Nikiforov's *Vostok i sverhnatsionalizm* (The Orient and Global History) which is a substantial, 350-page long, uncompromising reaffirmation of the anti-Azitchik position. Surprisingly, Dunn makes no reference to this important book, though other contributions by Nikiforov to the debate are noted and commented on. Nikiforov's book contains a clear and entirely convincing argument explaining why the AMP is really incompatible with Marxism (and incidentally, why it ought not to be invoked in the ideological accompaniment to the Russo-Chinese dispute): an unconvincing historical argument to the effect that Asian societies generally went through the historical stages, without the AMP; and a very interesting, subtle, and at least plausible, if not fully convincing, argument to the effect that Marx and Engels had remained Azitchik until very nearly the end of Marx's life, but had then definitely abandoned it, perceiving the truth, and realizing the implications of their own previous heresy under the impact largely of Russian material and of Morgan, brought to them by a Russian, M. M. Kovalevsky.

Above all, however, Nikiforov's book contains a thorough history of the entire debate, comparable to Dunn's, except that it is far more ambitious, and endeavours also to cover the entire pre-Soviet discussion of Asian society. Anyone who pursues this matter further will obviously have to use both

Nikiforov and Dunn. Dunn is a full-time observer of the Soviet scene who, as co-editor of *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology*, is doing valuable work in making Soviet material in this field available to those who do not read Russian. This makes the absence of Nikiforov's volume among his references very strange. Soviet books are often extremely difficult to get hold of, and any good book is said to be sold out there within hours; thereafter it is a matter of luck what one can find. But Nikiforov was reviewed in the Soviet scholarly press, for instance, by the Orientalist Aliev.

If Nikiforov's book is an interesting counter-example to Dunn's conclusions, there exists another counter-example, of a thinker who is pro-Azitchik but does not use any terminological snobism, which according to Dunn generally accompanies the neo-Azitchik victory. That thinker is Yuri Semenov. Once again, Dunn quotes other contributions by him, but not his latest and highly relevant article. The only person to hold to a terminologically blunt Azitchikism, according to Dunn, is G. A. Melikishvili, and he has held his peace, it appears, since the early 1970s. In fact Semenov has reaffirmed the position in a volume which appeared in 1980, *Gosudarstvo i agrarnaya evolyutsiya v razvivshisya khristianskikh stranakh Azii i Afriki* (Government and Agrarian Evolution in the Developing Countries of Asia and Africa), edited by Yu. G. Aleksandrov and others (Nauka, Moscow, 1980). This volume, devoted primarily to contemporary problems of agrarian development in the Third World, is admittedly not a place where one would look for socio-historical discussions. Semenov firmly asserts (in diametrical opposition to Nikiforov) that Marx never abandoned the idea of the AMP: all that happened was that he realized that examples of it were to be found outside Asia and so he preferred to abandon this misleadingly geographical terminology. Semenov himself proposes a new term for it, of *poliarism*. This term does not merely free the notion of misleadingly geographical associations, it positively underscores the role of government in the system. Semenov affirms this in so many words: in this kind of society "the formation of classes was simultaneous with the formation of government". By his very terminology and argument, it seems as if Semenov were eager to underscore those features of the AMP which had given offence to other Marxists.

Apart from his failure to note these two works, Dunn also fails to comment on the striking parallelism and contrasts between this debate and another one, namely that concerning the social structure of nomadic societies. This debate too has a long, complex and fascinating history in the Soviet Union, and some schools have participated in both of them. In some ways, it is even more interesting: the Soviet Union has not inherited any slave-owning societies, but it has inherited from Tsarism very considerable nomadic pastoral populations. So the question is practical as well as theoretical, and the marriage of theory and practice, as so often, is rather tenuous. Nomadic societies share with "Asiatic" ones their stagnation. These accords once again promise no oaks. In other ways, the problems they raise for Marxism are different. If the Asians fail to fit into a slave-owning model, the nomads fail to fit into a feudalist one. If Asian societies inspire horror and fear – perhaps we may come to resemble them? – Nomads sometimes inspire admiration, and the question: Why did they need to be destroyed? If they were only endowed with a most rudimentary class structure, who exactly was it who had to be liquidated during the reconstruction? Socialist pastoralism took many, many years to restore the flocks to the level that had prevailed under the old order. Much of this debate about the social potential of nomads will, one hopes, soon become available to Western readers: the Anatoli Khazanov's book on nomadism is published in English. There is also mention of a previous attempt to give an account of the Asiatic Mode of Production by Martin Savner (Survay, Summer, 1979).

Notwithstanding these omissions, Dunn's succinct volume must be welcome as a most useful introduction and guide to a fascinating subject, important both in itself and for the light it sheds on Soviet intellectual life.



"Take away your slogans; give us something to swallow, I Give us beer or brandy or schnapps or gin; I This is the only road for the self-betrayed to follow – I The last way out that leads not out but in." Louis MacNeice photographed in *The Stag's Head*, Hallam Street, for Picture Post in 1949.

Defences against dread

Anthony Thwaite

ROBYN MARSACK

The Cave of Making: The Poetry of Louis MacNeice
170pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£12.50.
0 19 811718 3

Louis MacNeice concluded the preface to his book *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats* (1940) with the words:

The background of a poem, its origin, its purpose, its ingredients, can be analysed and formulated, but the poem itself can only be experienced. All that the critic can do is lay stepping stones over the river – stones which are better forgotten once the reader has reached a position where he is in touch with the subject of criticism.

MacNeice's book is as much about MacNeice as it is about Yeats: the Anglo-Irish poet in his early thirties had to come to terms with his formidable senior, lately dead, and sense had to be made of attitudes which repelled him as well as of praise given to poems he loved ("If I were making a general anthology of short English poems, I should want to include some sixty by W. B. Yeats. There is no other poet in the language from whom I should choose so many.")

Robyn Marsack's study of MacNeice's poetry, for all its merits, isn't at all the same sort of thing as MacNeice's book on Yeats, though the blurb makes comparisons. Its intention resembles that of MacNeice's book on Yeats, to make clear that he is a less simple and more substantial poet than many of his admirers and some of his detractors think him. "This is in fact a misquotation of the first sentence in MacNeice's final chapter: 'a less simple and a more substantial poet than many of his detractors and some of his admirers think him.' Dr Marsack is as a lawyer of stepping stones. She doesn't in any way obscure her own judgment to the point of coolness: 'If MacNeice is not in the company of Yeats and Eliot, among modern poets, his achievement is still considerable.' Surely the evaluating job doesn't need to bring in the names of Yeats and Eliot but that of Auden, the figure to whom MacNeice is still too often considered an appendage, along with Day Lewis and Spender. But Marsack is not really concerned with establishing ratings and nor was MacNeice, who wrote: 'I am not interested in ranking poets and I am not even very much interested in greatness *per se*. The poets who interest me are the poets whom I like to read.' Though not billed as such, *The Cave of Making* is actually a

Reader's Guide to MacNeice, as good – though not as wide-ranging – as John Fuller's book on Auden.

Since MacNeice's death in 1963, enthusiasts and exegetes have not neglected him – though his publishers allowed the 1966 *Collected Poems* (beautifully edited by the late E. R. Dodds) to be out of print for a shamefully long time. Terence Brown, William McKinnon, D. B. Moore and John Press have all published books or booklets on the work, Barbara Coulton's *Louis MacNeice in the BBC* has appeared, and the long-delayed official biography is at last being written, by Jon Stallworthy. But Robyn Marsack's book, in spite of her detachment, is the best to appear so far.

This is partly because she has had access to, and made good use of, MacNeice's drafts and papers, many of them in American collections (the Berg, Buffalo, Columbia, Texas), some held by Heddi MacNeice. Her study of these manuscripts, often considered in detail, shows again and again that some of MacNeice's best poems came quickly and cleanly, almost without revision, and that some of his worst (for example *Autumn Sequel*) were the result of great toil. He was fluent; he was also quite consciously a maker, a craftsman – but the craftsmanship was usually at its best when it was not laboured over too much or too long, when (to use MacNeice on Yeats) he broke "his own rules and turned his liabilities into assets". By the time he was writing the poems in *Solitudes* and *The Burning Perch*, fluency, craftsmanship and happy accidents often came together, as they had done in *Autumn Journal* and before.

MacNeice once quoted a remark of Auden's in a review (and Marsack also relays it): "the more [he] is conscious of an inner disorder and dread, the more value he will place on tidiness in the work as a defence." MacNeice's best poems are scrupulously tidy, not in any sense of boring neatness but in their superb technical finish. That they were also the result of "an inner disorder and dread" isn't to be doubted, though Marsack seldom goes into much biographical or psychological detail: there is a tantalizing mention of such key moments as his mother's death in 1914, his departure from Northern Ireland in the bewilderingly rapid break-up of his first marriage, the "unexpected love affair" that touched off many of the poems in *Solitudes*, and behind all these his ambivalent feelings about his father, and the haunting, scarcely-to-be-uttered shadow of his mongoloid brother, Marsack, writing of the failure of *Autumn Sequel*, catches very exactly the quality of man and poet: "It caused MacNeice to obscure the one thing that might have held the poem together: his

own observant, striving, desolate, sociable, isolated self."

The thoughtful accuracy of those epithets is often matched in Marsack's sensitive analysis of MacNeice's techniques in individual poems. For example, of the early "Valediction" she writes:

The opening is oblique, an odd sliding into the subject, with its repetitive first phrase and details that slowly coalesce. "Valediction" is scattered with this kind of checked emphasis, as though MacNeice is tacking slightly until he can trust himself to go directly ahead, and it gives a necessary tension to the structure, pulling against the regularity of the couplets.

Again, commenting on the later poem (and one supposes with a blear regard for Craig Raine, Christopher Reid, etc.), she says:

His is not the "making strange" technique, by which objects are lifted out of their usual context and in the new one are sharply redefined; MacNeice strips a familiar thing and puts it in such a light that its eeriness is revealed.

This is a good book, without pretensions beyond those of a reader's companion or commentary. Here and there in discussing poems Marsack misses an obvious reference or parallel; for example, "Intimations of Mortality" begins with a deliberate echo of Robert Louis Stevenson, and the Harlequin/Picasso lines from "An Eclogue for Christmas" sound very like MacNeice consciously making use of Edith Sitwell. MacNeice – as Marsack realizes – was a very literary and allusive poet, for all his "poet as common man" statements of the 1930s. He was also, from early on, a marvellous and memorable rhetorician, to be compared in our time only with Auden, Dylan Thomas and Larkin. In his mid-twenties he could turn such a stanza as:

But all this is a dilettante's lie.
Time's face is not stone nor still his wings.
Our mind, being dead, wishes to have
die

For we, being ghosts, cannot catch hold of things

And the year before his death:
And the names we read seem more than
Poisons, or amulets, till we remember
The lines of priat are always sidleless.
And all our games funeral games.

In a snitty review of the *Collected Poems 1925-1944*, a TLS reviewer dismissed MacNeice as showing "appallingly" and "limited achievement". Fortunately by the time of his death MacNeice had better treatment than that. Robyn Marsack's book helps further to establish the reputation of one of the best poets of the century.

P. H. BUTTER (Editor)

William Blake: Selected Poems
301pp. Dent. £2.50.
0 460 01125 1

Blake could properly praise his work, he said, since he was only the Secretary, and "the Authors are in Eternity". His remark that sometimes he took dictation "even against my Will" may embolden us to wonder whether errors may not have crept in. At all events – and pushing aside memories of office life – there seem to be two authors involved, one a poet and the other a prophet, who at times operate independently, so that we pass from unmistakable eloquence to what looks much like bombast.

For all Blake's insistence on "Minute Particulars", the "Giant Forms" of the longer works are giant abstractions whose very appellatives sap credibility. Yet particulars are there, and so tellingly particular that the reader does not need to be a crank to feel impelled to interpret what otherwise would fail utterly to tempt him. Poet and prophet merge, then separate, then merge again. Thus, out of the wind and wailing of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, arise the fine passage on the animals ("With what sense does the tame pigeon measure out the expanse? Ask the wild ass why he refuse burdens, and the meek camel / Why he loves man . . .") and such cognecies as "Can that be Love, that drinks another as a sponge drinks water?" Or the entrancing opening of *Europe* ("Five windows light the cavern'd Man"), before we are plunged into the phantasmagoric maelstrom of Orc, Enitharmon, Urthona, Urizen, Los, Ocalythron, Ethinthus, Manathu-Voreyon and their sons and daughters, along with Westminster, Great George Street and the Park Gate. Or

The Jew's-harp-house and the Green Man, The Ponds where Boys to bathe delight, The fields of Cows by William's farm, Shine in Jerusalem's pleasant light . . . Did he who made these lines make up Golgotha, those comic-strip names, Allamanda, those comic-strip names?

This new and admirable selection replaces, not in all respects but with the addition of some seventy pages of notes, Max Plozman's fuller *Poems and Prophecies* of 1927. In his introduction P. H. Butter ascribes the diversity of Zoas and their Emanations and Spectres to "the fragmentation of man". An explanation of what is going on rather than a vindication, this serves

to bring out the grandness of Blake's undertaking and also the attendant perils. "All deities reside in the human breast", in comparison Faust's two souls are child's play! It could be Blake himself who was fragmented: poet, prophet, philosopher, psychologist, his abstractions and his particulars jostling in the street, in the heavens, Jung and Freud were more discreet; while wanting in mystery – but mystery, I take it, was what they were out to dispel, or at least reduce – they gained from the mere lucidity of prose.

For the defence, I must cite Kathleen Raine's opinion (in her *Choice of Blake's Verse* of 1970) that these "archetypal beings" will "seem less strange to a generation familiarized by Jung with the idea of a 'collective' unconscious peopled by such figures as Blake depicted and described, than to those matter-of-fact minds of the nineteenth century who thought him an inspired madman". (I would not myself have thought Jung so potent.) Miss Raine, we might note, observes that, though Blake is often invoked by the political left, he was a religious mystic and the enemy of materialist and mechanistic ideologies, and also that his "doors of perception" have precious little in common with the cult of psychedelics drugs. True, yet one can see why it is that both the radical left and the exponents of "mind-expanding" hallucinogens have felt able to draw on him for support, or at least fine phrases.

The compulsion towards exegesis among those with no axe to grind is stronger in the case of this writer than with any other who comes to mind, and I may be wrong in believing that, where the "prophetic books" are concerned, the final fruits are not likely to be substantial. Of course, the author of *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*, of other shorter poems and the beautiful *Book of Thel*, can afford his failures, even on (or especially on) so vast and original a scale. Professor Butter is right in judging that "the best combination" of poet and prophet is in the two sets of *Songs*, and in noting that neither set sticks exclusively to its description and

"Without Contraries is no progression" – no individual poem negates its counterpart. They too cannot always be interpreted with much assurance; and even in this connection we may incline to fall back on the escape clause offered by the blurb here: Blake's apparently opaque poems "are, in so far as major poetry ever is, perfectly intelligible, though

not of course fully explicable". (Which is either a truism or nonsense.) Or else, and hardly more comfortably, on Keats's account of the writer who is "capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason", so that "the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration".

Butter's notes are brief and, except when factual (Washington, Franklin, Warren, Gates, Hancock and Green were American leaders), tentative, frequently offering a choice of meanings, and (which is not exactly a fault) somewhat simplistic. The "innocent" version of "The Chimney Sweeper" is scarcely joyous, though it contains some very sly social sense (if your lovely hair is shaved off, at least it can't be spoilt by the soot), and is distinctly reminiscent of the old theory about pie in the sky when you die – an impression reinforced by the pious closing line. "So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm." Butter annotates: "The conventional motto is the boy's, not the poet's" – true, this is an innocent view of things, and quite sufficiently modified by his "experienced" counterpart, and "what the poem has shown that Tom can be happy because he still has the capacity for vision, not because he does his duty in the sense the elder boy may intend". Even so, it is the Angel in Tom's vision who tells him to be a good boy, thus revealing himself as an agent of the pie-in-the-sky party.

I think Butter is at times inclined – though less so than most commentators on the poet – to take his own (very decent) will for Blake's deed. On the other hand, "The Tyger" and "A Hound" strike me as less questioning, more incisive, than the notes suggest, while "The Sick Rose" is so packed and piercing, so persuasively sure of itself, that it could apply to almost any situation. Butter's reading, based on the traditional use of the rose as a symbol of love and of a young girl, seems limiting: "The rose is destroyed from within by the canker-worm, the girl's love-life by forces which enter secretly into her mind." Those "forces" and indeed that "love-life" may have been imported from elsewhere in Blake. Such importation doesn't impress me as necessarily reprehensible, but Butter implies elsewhere that the reader should confine himself to the poem actually in front of him.

The note on Plates 16-17 of *The*

Marriage of Heaven and Hell obscures what is clear in the text by finding it hard to believe that Blake considered "the cunning of weak and tame minds" necessary to human existence and supposing that he had not yet developed "his idea that there are 'negations', which must be destroyed, as well as active 'contraries', which must be preserved in creative tension". It is unlikely that Blake would have been blind to so blatant a "negation". And in fact the chains in which the creative Giants (those "sources of all activity") live are firmly deployed: they are mind-forged manacles, forged by those who are cunning ("weak and tame") rather than courageous. However, this points to a prime obstacle in Blake – the difficulty of telling, at a specific juncture, who are the goodies, who the baddies. While the general import of Blake's thought fairly readily takes, his crowded canvases – too many characters doing too many things – blur rather than sharpen or develop it.

Symbols shift, so that in *America* the dragon of Albion (George III) is evil because he is warring on the freedom-loving colonists, whereas the dragon in the "Printing house in Hell" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* must be good since he is cleaning rubbish away from the doors of perception. Admittedly we have been warned against using one piece to elucidate another, yet one can hardly be blamed for seeing or trying to see Blake's work as a coherent or partially coherent whole. By and large it can be said that Butter's comments on the prophetic books help us to make our way through them, if rather unsteadily; it cannot so certainly be said (which is not his fault) that they make us positively want to make our way.

Next to Shakespeare, Blake must be the most memorable of our poets. His aphorisms and generalizations, because of their drive and cutting edge, sound like categorical imperatives. And when we understand something, or think we do, surely it is fair to ask – if possible without too much irritability reaching after fact and reason – whether we believe it to be true. We ought not to rely dumbly on that famous "terrifying honesty". We are likely to find acceptable those "hellish" proverbs, "Eternity is in love with the productions of time" (and since we are not worms) "The out worm forgives the plow"; and likewise (unless we are hunters) "Blake's outcry of the hunted Hare / A fibre from the Brain does shoot"; "To be in a Passion you Good

may do, / But no Good if a Passion is in you", together with much else from "Auguries of Innocence".

But do we think it is always true that those who restrain desire do so because their desire is weak enough to be restrained? (In logic, yes.) Does the road of excess invariably lead to the palace of wisdom? (We could die *en route*.) The nakedness of woman may indeed be the work of God, but surely he who desires and acts can sometimes breed something worse than a vague pestilence. Does a firm persuasion that a thing is so, make it so? (Yes and no. It all depends. His humour often goes unrecognized, and this may be a Blakeian joke; though I rather doubt it.) And then: "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires", which pulls Butter up short. "If taken literally this is Blake being even more than usually provocative" – he is right to worry, for it lies in the midst of excellent advice and rather trendy-sounding apophthegms. Zen-like. Sufi-like. A respectable interpretation is found: "But if the nursing metaphor governs the whole sentence then the 'infant' is the unacted desire which it is better to kill before it has grown big rather than to 'nurture'." This strikes me as strained and at odds with the earlier proverb predicting disaster for those who desire but act not.

For obvious reasons, nigglings of this kind – if nigglings it is – would be far more arduous to sustain in relation to the prophetic books, and it could be held that equivocality is in the very nature of proverbial utterance. That argument, I suppose, would disabie me from appealing to another of Blake's proverbs: "Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not believed."

Truth was what Blake desired to communicate, but truth too is made up of small particulars and special cases. He was a unique poet and – if not truly a prophet – probably a saint. "I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's . . .". The declaration came from Los in *Jerusalem*, who would not reason and compare, for his business was to create. But it sounds very much like Blake speaking for himself. I cannot think that he managed to reconcile the creation of a system of his own with the requirement affirmed in another of Los's statements: "he who wishes to see a Vision, a perfect Whole, / Must see it in its Minute Particulars. Organized . . .". Perhaps one is asking too much – but it is what Blake asked of himself.

Urban urgings

Fred Schwarzbach

WILLIAM B. THESING

The London Muse: Victorian Poetic Responses to the City
226pp. University of Georgia Press
(UK Distributors: Transatlantic Book Service, London). £15.
0 8203 0619 3

Urban malediction coupled with praise of the countryside was a constant preoccupation of poets from the 1780s well into our own century: even Byron, that most urbane of urban poets, borrowed Cowper's line "God made the country, and man made the town" in *Don Juan* as part of his almost embarrassingly overblown praise of what he imagined to be the rustic virtues of North American backwoodsmen. The conventional view is that this mistrust of the city led poets to ignore it, but as William B. Thesing convincingly demonstrates, there was in fact a rich and diverse poetic response to the city, even if a largely negative one.

It is unfortunate, however, that this study is not well presented, bearing the usual mark of its origin as an academic thesis: moreover, the introductory chapter on the Romantics is far too brief and its relation to the argument which follows is never made quite clear. But the reader who perseveres

will find that on his home ground Professor Thesing is an able and instructive guide.

That ground is the poetry of the city in the second half of the century. Thesing documents a growing sense among writers, from the early 1850s, that modern urban life had thrown up certain urgent challenges which poets were ignoring. Clough, for example, in 1853 urged his fellows "to gain the ear of multitudes; to shake the hearts of men" by writing not of pastoral bliss but of "the actual, palpable things with which our everyday life is concerned". Clough argued not only that poets should aim for greater documentary realism but that in a changing world the role of poetry itself would need to change. How could poets reach out to urban dwellers, who were degraded and demoralized by the pressures of city life? Should poetry seek to restore and revivify their battered souls? To do this was it necessary to take modern materials – railways, factories, city streets and events – for images and subjects in verse? And could the poet find the contemplative repose he needed to write: poetry within the crowded, noisy precincts of the town?

Thesing distinguishes three main chronological divisions in the response to this call. In the first, 1850-70, poets attempted to face up to the city, but found the stuff of modern city life too sterna, and most gave up the struggle and retreated to the countryside, literally and figuratively. From 1870 to

1890, a period characterized by urban class strife, poets strove to sympathize with the working classes, but eventually all except Morris drew back in horror or despair when they realized political violence was imminent. Then, in the 1890s, poets at last were able to take the everyday life of the city and transmute it into positive, lyrical statements about the virtues of urban existence.

This thesis is, I think, somewhat too neat (and borrows too uncritically from the work of Raymond Williams). Thesing ignores the fact that calls to poets to meet the challenges of modern urban life began long before the 1850s; Wordsworth makes these the same plea in the 1800 "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*. Thesing fails also to discuss the rich tradition of comic verse, where from the 1850s there were precisely the open acceptance of urban subjects and realistic portrayal of the city he finds lacking elsewhere. But it is one of the virtues of *The London Muse* that the overall theme does not intrude too much in the discussions of individual poets, where the author shows a firm sense of the outline of each career and the merits and defects of the poetry.

Indeed, one of the great surprises here is just how many writers did at least attempt to write verse about London and city life. One of Thesing's most valuable contributions is to insist that the work of a number of major poets, principally Clough and Arnold, must be seen within the context of their

involvement in and concern with what were essentially urban themes and issues. Particularly in the case of Arnold this suggests a fresh and productive way to read even those poems (like "Empedocles") not directly about urban subjects. Thesing also draws attention to the work of a number of interesting minor city poets.

There is one important problem here, however, and though Thesing shows awareness of it he does not come to grips with it. It is that so much of the poetry of the city is second-rate at best, and at worst laughable in its badness. There was at mid-century no English Baudelaire, no English Whitman, nor even a poetical Dickens, as Arnold wrote to Clough in 1847 (in a letter Thesing quotes), the modern age simply was not suited to poetry – "not unprofound, not ungraced, not unmoving; – but *unpoetical*". No matter how many pleas went forth to write poetry which addressed the needs of an urban age, poets generally looked to muses other than the urban for inspiration. Why this is so is a question central to any analysis of the English poetic response to the city, and by not addressing it Professor Thesing can give us only an incomplete version.

But if *The London Muse* tells only half the story we ought to have, none the less it is a half well told and is to be welcomed as an indispensable contribution to our knowledge of the role of the city in the nineteenth-century literary imagination.

Criticism in paperback

Critical editions of two major English poets, Spenser and Keats, are among recent paperback releases of verse and literary criticism. Hugh Maclean's selection of *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, first published in 1968, now appears in a new and enlarged edition (748pp. Norton. £6.50. 0 393 95138 3); it includes a generous sample of critical opinion, chiefly twentieth-century, on the poet. *John Keats: Complete Poems*, edited by Jack Stallinger (493pp. Harvard University Press. £7. hardback. £14. 0 674 15431 2), supplements the texts of the poems with an eighty-page section of notes. New light is thrown on Keats's contemporary, Shelley, in *Shelley on Love* (247pp. Avon Press Poetry. £3.95. 0 85646 101 6), an anthology of the poet's hitherto little-known prose writings on this topic, edited by Richard Holmes, to be published later this month.

Michael Hamburger's 1969 study, *The Truth of Poetry: Tensions in Modern Poetry from Baudelaire to the 1960s* (347pp. Methuen. £4.95. 0 416 34240 X), now appears with a postscript from the author in which he notes that "it is the theory, the jargon and the prescriptions that have changed" since the book's first publication; also revised is *Victorian Fantasy* (257pp. Brighton: Harvester. £6.95. 0 7108 0035 5). Stephen Prickett's account of the "counter-tradition" to the prevailing realism of the period.

Sunset in the West

Roger Owen

J. M. COETZEE

Dusklands
125pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.
0 436 10296 X

First published in South Africa in 1974, *Dusklands* is J. M. Coetzee's first work of fiction. Two other remarkable novels by this young Afrikaner (*In the Heart of the Country* and *Waiting for the Barbarians*) have, although written later, already been published in Britain — it is hard to see why this one has taken so long to arrive. *Dusklands* is made up of two stories. One (*The Vietnam Project*) is set in the United States in the late 1960s; the other (*The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee*) in South Africa two hundred years earlier. Each tale is complete in itself, but their nature and design are such that the book can and should be read as a single work. It is a kind of diptych, carefully hinged and aligned, and of a texture so glossy and mirror-like that each story throws light on the other.

There are moments when (the authorial) J. M. Coetzee's artefact seems too deliberately contrived and the stories' purposes lose themselves in technical dazzle. But overall the book is rich, inventive, and full of energy. The prose is varied and flexible, responsive to many changes of mood and pace.

Coetzee makes it clear that the dusklands of the title are those "evening lands" where the sun has set in other words, the "West". His concept, though, is historical and philosophical rather than geographic or politically sectarian. It points to the large notion of a post-seventeenth-century "modern" world. This, in Coetzee's version, is a grey, denatured place where technology and abstraction buzz and chatter, where consciousness feeds on itself, and feeling is murdered. It is a world in which knowledge has become the deceptive form taken by peculiar kinds of ignorance.

The first story begins with these words: "My name is Eugene Dawn. I can't help that. Here goes." The three sentences are a kind of opening chord, made up of the notes we are to hear again and again. There is first Eugene's concern for factuality and labelling; next his resentful fear and paranoia, and finally his faith in the efficacy of the will.

Eugene is employed by an American Foundation charged with delivering insights which will be of practical use in winning the Vietnam war. These are derived from such characteristically "modern" human sciences as linguistics, anthropology, games theory, the study of myth and so on. In these disciplines (and their taint, we are to understand, is inherent — they are not simply guilty by association) Eugene is expert. They are to serve him badly.

"People who doubt themselves", he pronounces, "have no core. I am doing

my best to fashion a core for myself." Eugene, stealing himself with invocations from the books and articles he has read, applies his will to everything — to the anarchical fits and convulsions of his body, to his interview technique, to his failed relationships at work and to his dead marriage. There is a comic or Pooterish feel to the story at first, but this fades as his mis-readings of the world become grotesque. His madness erupts in an act of horrifying violence and he ends up in a locked asylum. There he is cooperative and amenable. Bereft of reason by "reason" he unregenerately clings to it.

Of his therapists he says, "Having a background in myth, I am able every now and then to surprise them with an insight — a neat condensation here, an odd displacement there. I think they must find me an exceptional patient."

He is poignantly wrong. And, in this book, so are "they" — by definition. The effect is bleakly moving.

The second story recounts the adventures of a Boer frontiersman and explorer in the early 1700s. Scholarly footnotes, a "Translator's Preface" and similar spoofery purport to give it the authority of a "document".

The greater part is not only fiction, but fiction whose "fictiveness" Coetzee

showily chooses to parade. Again, however, much of the writing is marvellously precise.

The story reaches its climax when Jacobus Coetzee and his party visit a terrible vengeance on a Hottentot tribe. The description of this massacre is clinically detached — the ghastliness unfolds as in a piece of silent newsreel footage. The narrator is indeed a fantasist, driven by a mad solipsism which moulds the external world to his will; the wrath he feels towards the Hottentots is caused by their failure to accommodate him. They failed even to die him to a stake and dance around him. They chose not to adhere to any of the scripts or scenarios spawned by his fantasies. They treated him instead with a mixture of curiosity and indifference, and their children even found him funny. He can't have that.

J. M. Coetzee pursues a certain grand metaphysical design which not everyone will find palatable. He is metaphysical in the other sense too — a setter of ingenious puzzles. As he evidently realizes (and covertly lets it be known) he is himself the embodiment of some of what he criticizes. But in general he uses his own inner contradictions to remarkable effect.

Under threat

Frank Tuohy

BERNARD MAC LAVERTY

Cal
170pp. Cape. £6.95.
0 234 02062 5

Cal is Bernard Mac Laverty's second novel — he has also published two volumes of short stories — and it displays an admirable confidence and sureness of touch. *Cal* is one of those fairly short, densely organized novels with a strong narrative, providing no space for random commentary or picturesque speech. The precision of the writing, the lack of fuss with which a variety of characters is established, create a sense of elation which transcends theme and subject. Here, in a modest and unlikely setting, is an illustration of Henry James's dictum, in reply to H. G. Wells, that "art makes life, makes interest, makes importance."

The action takes place in contemporary Ulster where, it must be confessed by now, not only life itself, but interest and importance have often seemed at risk. Though stemming of course from the historical legacy of Ireland, *Cal* is unique in that none of the factions involved has attracted commitment from outsiders: there is no Erskine Childers, as far as one knows, no Maud Gonne. Yet there is no dearth of writing, either in verse or prose. With the poets, it is possible to be reminded of Yeats's remark somewhere about his *confères* in the

Nineties — that he didn't know which was good or bad, but he was sure they were too many. Prose writers impinge less frequently on our attention. With *Cal* Mac Laverty joins Jennifer Johnston and Dervla Murphy (author of the excellent non-fiction work *A Place Apart*). These, like the poets, move beyond commitment, beyond neutrality, to an awareness of the humanity that remains.

In this, all three follow the best Irish writing, reflecting not only Joyce's "plague on both your houses" but also the marked ambiguities of Yeats's "Easter 1916". It is an attitude that once caused outrage: Maud Gonne and her henchmen protesting outside O'Casey's early plays. Literature is no longer central in this way, and certainly none of the partisans is interested. Writers are free — as Mac Laverty shows — to present the questions and not provide the answers.

Cal's story is that of a young man of some charm and intelligence and his efforts to rid himself of his terrorist connections. Too squeamish to work with his father in the slaughterhouse, he is unemployed, spending his time strumming a guitar and visiting the local library, where he borrows tapes of Muddy Waters and falls in love with the librarian, Marcella. *Cal* and his Protestant father, the late Catholics in the town, live under threat. Threats also come from Crilly, *Cal*'s contemporary at school, a natural sadist who is exploited by the leading terrorist, Finbar Skeffington.

With his attractive energy and obvious limitations, *Cal* reminds one of some young Americans portrayed in recent films. There is something cinematic, too, about the treatment of Marcella, the widow of a Protestant farmer, and even more about the conclusion, when the lovers spend a last night together before the arrival of the RUC. This impression is, I think, connected with a basic error of construction. *Cal* has a dark secret, and it is perfectly legitimate for him to keep it from the woman he loves, since knowledge would cause her to reject him. But for the reader, who shares to be kept in the dark looks like professional sleight-of-hand, a touch of the revelation is incomplete. Marcella does not learn it — and thus loses its impact.

Randall Jarrell once remarked that a novel is a place, a place that has something wrong with it. Short concise novels like *Cal* show up such faults with unambiguous clarity (*The Great Gatsby*, one of the most famous, has an excruciating professional twist). But technical problems cannot detract from the general effect of a novel that is serious, compassionate and subtly cheering.

Unblocking

David Montrose

JOHN UDKIKE

Bech is Back
195pp. Andre Deutsch. £6.95.
0 233 97512 8

... this fortyish young man ... with his thinning curly hair and melancholy Jewish nose, the author of one good book and three others, the good one having come first. By a kind of oversight, he had never married. His reputation had grown while his powers declined.

Thus, in "The Bulgarian Poetess", was Henry Bech, scion of Manhattan, introduced to New Yorker readers in 1965. Somewhat unexpectedly, the story took first prize in the O. Henry Awards, inspiring John Udkike to recall Bech, originally intended as a one-off, for further misadventures. In time, the stories were arranged into a loose sequence and *Bech: A Book* appeared in 1970.

The book has always been considered a minor achievement, partly because it came between two larger events in Udkike's career: the once-notorious *Couples* and the return, in *Rabbit Redux*, of Harry Angstrom. But there were intrinsic shortcomings, too. In particular, when following-up "The Bulgarian Poetess", Udkike had misinterpreted or ignored its appeal. Having toured Eastern Europe at State Department expense as a cultural ambassador, Udkike had written the story to utilize impressions collected en route. Bech was invented simply to act as his vehicle, a device for transforming autobiography into fiction. Readers found "The Bulgarian Poetess" to be rather slight, but redeemed by its engaging protagonist (although Bech was primarily intended as a proxy set of faculties, Udkike had avoided flatness). A virtually unalloyed comic figure, Bech was something of a departure for the author, but still came across as a typical Udkike hero: preoccupied with discovering the central woman, a writer's block, his better days behind him. Admittedly, these qualities were only sketchily explored in that first story, but here, surely, was a suitable case for development.

Instead, Udkike largely retained his initial formula: Bech continued to function as a kind of cultural flunkey; wherever Udkike went, he was sure to follow. "Bech in Rumania" and "Rich in Russia" made further use of the writer's impressions of Eastern Europe; "Bech Takes Pot Luck" and "Bech Swings?" placed his hero in, respectively, Martha's Vineyard and Swinging London. These and other stories put some flesh on the original bones, but Bech's character was generally a side-issue. In particular, the rich possibilities, comic or otherwise, of Bech's block were passed over for relatively painless jabs at aspects of literary life, notably Bech's ability to abandon writing altogether as his silence and renown flourished together. Forster-like, while lucrative opportunities to read or lecture increased correspondingly. The author's conception of his hero, it seemed, had been conditioned by those humble beginnings.

In *Bech is Back*, the latest sequence, little has changed except that Bech is older, balding, heavier, even more respected (his silence having attained Salingeresque proportions). Only in the novella-length, and overlong at that, "Bech Wed" does Udkike write about his creation instead of exploiting him. Unfortunately, even here, as throughout the volume, Bech seems if anything a less complex character than before. Elsewhere, he remains firmly in his place as a not-so-innocent abroad or a literary fall-guy.

Udkike has evidently travelled far and wide since 1970. The fragmentary construction of "Bech: Third Worlds I" and "Australia and Canada" reflects the interchangeability of the touring writer's experience. Central Africa, Korea, and Venezuela become a whirl of sights, seen, lectures, translators, embassy parties, Sydney and Toronto are indistinguishable. Having made their point quickly, though, the stories lapse into

unmemorableness. Bech is a conventional tourist in "The Holy Land" and "Machbeth". The first scenes from his honeymoon with Beatrice Latchett ("Bea"), the last in a chain of mistresses — is almost straight travel writing: the reader accompanies the couple along the Via Dolorosa, into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to the Walling Wall (reluctantly touched by Bech). Bech, an Episcopalian, is thrilled by the sanctity of it all; but for Bech, no Zionist, Israel is devoid of sentimental significance. He is offended by the religious, the commercialism, the unimpressive holy sites. Yet in Bech's ancestral home, the Scottish Highlands, it is Bech who experiences the sense of belonging. In the Clearances, he perceives a historical parallel with his own ancestors' European ordeal: the unpeopled Highland pastures are a symbol of oppression in a way that Israel was not.

So much for Bech the traveller; what of Bech the writer? Well, a zenith of sorts is reached in one of the anecdotes comprising "Three Illuminations in the Life of an American Author" as Bech undergoes creative agony over the highly remunerative task of inscribing his name on to sheets of paper to be bound into a deluxe edition of one of his novels. Dissatisfied with his "ugly signatures", he experiments with different handwriting; supplied with cartons of felt-tip pens, he has trouble finding ones that suit his "hypersensitive grasp". Finally, he gazes deep into the negative perfection to which his career had been brought. He could not even write his own name. "A neat joke, but, at nine pages, a long-drawn-out one."

Then, in "Bech Wed", comes an astonishing resurgence. Bech has moved in with Bea and her children, quitting Manhattan for a mock-Tudor mansion estate, among alien WASPs. Here, prodded by Bea, Bech takes to his attic and completes *Think Big*, a perpetual work-in-progress. A bulky saga of power and sex, it makes Bech a million. Bea sets about refurbishing the house and pesters him to begin regular production. Increasingly, Bech apprehends their different attitudes. His concern has always been to write books worthy of himself; his silence was an acceptance that he could no longer do so. For Bea, though, a worthy book is one that sells. Consequently, in Bech's mind, *Think Big* — the unworthy best-seller she forced out of him — becomes her book, her dubious "triumph", more than it is his. When a long-discarded mistress tells Bech that she blames the book on Bea's influence, he is so grateful to receive unsought backing for his self-exculpation that he commits adultery with her. His marriage sets a course for the rocks.

As a story-writer, Udkike is often able to charge with meaning the apparently insubstantial and commonplace. The Bech stories, though, are exactly what they seem: slight, elegantly written tales about a figure who merits better treatment.

The blurb claims that "The problem of illusion and reality, of fame and art, and of fidelity to oneself and to others are all considered." Certainly Udkike flirts with these grand themes, but (with one exception) does little more than that, displaying a knack for skimming over the weighty and dwelling on the trivial. That exception is the problem of fame: if the stories do have an underlying theme, it is, albeit intermittently, Bech's reduction to a status symbol. Bech reveals in being married to a celebrity just as, in "Three Illuminations", a woman had loved Bech for "his literary side." In his text-book presence, "White on White", Bech is separated from Bea, is invited as the author of the moment to address the parties — just as earlier he was invited to adorn lecture-theatres. Even Udkike seems to think that Bech's name confers sufficient prestige to divert attention away from a shortage of inspiration.

Amalrik's bibliography is short and limited to books in Western languages. It is tragic that this talented refugee from present-day communism should have been accidentally killed in 1980

The Empress's holy fraud

Igor Vinogradoff

ANDREI AMALRIK

Raspoutine
Translated with a commentary by
Basile Karilinsky
284pp. Paris: Seuil. Fr. 70.
2 02 006089 2

ALEX DE JONGE

The Life and Times of Grigori
Raspoutine
368pp. Collins. £9.95.
00216723 9

Had a lovely evening yesterday ... so uplifting! There was a bishop, an old man, accused that he kissed women etc. He like Our Friend ... kissed everybody.
Drop that godliness, Grigori! drink up and talk plainly.

These quotations, one from a letter to her husband Nicholas II by the Empress Alexandra (in this instance humbugged by an ancient pedant as well as by Raspoutine), the other from Komissarov, the cynical gendarme colonel who looked after Raspoutine's security for some months, make suitable epigraphs for a review of two more efforts to rehabilitate that double-faced humbug, one-time honest thief, cunning vagabond, venal forer, richly paid publicity agent, specialist in holy cant and saintly fornication, fatal favourite and by far the most effective underminer of the Russian throne — Gregory Raspoutine.

The times were out of joint, but Imperial Russia under the last Emperor was less moribund than many writers about Russian history would have us think (including Alex de Jonge with his vision of vodka, cholera, venereal disease and pornographic writing riddling bodies and minds in St Petersburg). Russia's industrial revolution had got off to a late start in Alexander II's reign, but was proceeding with extraordinary speed by 1914, with a growth rate of up to 10 per cent a year. The country was at the beginning of an artistic, literary and spiritual renaissance. There had been a great development in education and the first mass-circulation newspapers were flourishing in the cities. Among university students and educated youth in general, Marxism was no longer fashionable. Russia's army had shown a marvellous resilience in the war, despite the terrible setbacks against the Germans; it was never better equipped than in February 1917.

There has been an inevitable reaction against the overblown Raspoutine myth of 1910-16. A mass of new material was hardly needed to reduce some of the absurdities, once believed all over Russia, and elsewhere, about Raspoutine — he was not a monk, the Empress's lover or a German agent. Apart from basic documents such as the evidence given before the Provisional Government's Inquiry Commission (published as *Pandora Tsarskogo Rezhlina* [Fall of the Tsar's régime] 1924-27), Senator Smiltren's report about Raspoutine, written with the help of high officials in the Holy Synod (*Voprosy Istori*, 1964-65), the Empress Alexandra's shattering correspondence with the Emperor, written in English and so published (Berlin/London, different editions, 1922/23; Russian edition, vols 3-5 only, 1923-27) and the numerous contemporary diaries and letters (published and unpublished), there has been a stream of memoirs, many of them written to cover up traces, restore exploded reputations or inflate the role played by their writers. It is these, led by the memoirs of the daughter of the "Man of God" himself, that have provided the material for what looks like turning into a campaign of whitewash. Without them books like those of Amalrik and de Jonge could not have appeared.

No revaluation of Raspoutine's character and rôle can possibly be satisfactory without careful analysis of the sources, but both Amalrik and de Jonge fail to provide this.

Amalrik's bibliography is short and limited to books in Western languages. It is tragic that this talented refugee from present-day communism should have been accidentally killed in 1980

but it is clear from his unfinished book (the narrative ends in March 1916) that he went even further than de Jonge in accepting Raspoutine at his own valuation. He likens him to Lenin and adopts the quite untenable position that this adventurer, who could never learn a text or put a reasoned case, was the conscious architect and promoter of a sapient policy for expropriating large estates and giving them to the peasants, according to justice to the Jews and negotiating peace at any price.

De Jonge cites over 160 books and articles and some twenty periodicals. This sounds more impressive than it is; it has not saved him from innumerable factual blunders. His list of sources is uncensored and quite unrefined; he puts third-rate gossip-writers like "Count Vassili" (the Princess Catherine Radziwill, best known for her forgeries of Cecil Rhodes's signature) and "Essad Bey" (the pseudonym of a cosmopolitan literary scavenger called Nossimbbaum), discredited journalists, sometimes posing as historians, like Lockhart, Russophobes like E. J. Dillon, and concoctors of "contemporary" diaries like the former French ambassador, Paléologue (whose work abounds in factual errors and was written up after the event), beside the solid documents already mentioned and many valuable extracts from contemporary newspapers (de Jonge's principal contribution to the study of the subject); moreover, he relies, quite unjustifiably, on the three self-contradictory apologies published in Maria Raspoutine's name from 1925 to 1977, with backing from the "memoirs" of that shameless sycophant Prince Zhevakhov.

Chronology is all-important in any assessment of Raspoutine's character and rôle. His life falls into two halves. During the first half (1864-1907) he graduated to St Petersburg from obscurity in his native Siberian village of Pokrovskoe after much wandering through Russia's holy places, learning the practices and sanctimonious phraseology of a sexually dominant prophet of emancipation from the fleshly lusts, by surrounding gross humbug, sometimes verging on phallic worship, and repentence; hence his great success with many women, failure with most men. For this period we have little evidence to go on — only a few recollected scraps, gathered by Smiltren from old peasants; some references from the papers in the first, and unsuccessful, prosecution against him for adherence to the "Khlyst" (flagellant) sect; the furious accusations of his enemy Ilodori (who first met him in December 1903); and the "memoirs" put together by his daughter Maria at much later dates. These start with an indignant rejection of the tales against him (although she accepts his own stories of visions of the Virgin and his recognition as a saintly personage by John of Kronstadt) and end, prompted by a Californian female journalist in 1977, with descriptions of his sexual orgies as the leader of a quasi-"khlyst" sect and an account, contributed by her co-author, Patte Barham, of his thirteen-inch penis, still preserved (!) looking like an overripe black banana, and revered by old Russian émigrés in Paris (sic!).

During the second period (1907-16) Raspoutine became established as the only healer capable of halting the Tsarevich Alexei's appalling fits of hemophilia, consorted as a Man of God in Alexandra Fedorovna's eyes, a saint whose advice on any matter must be heeded; hence his very real power in church appointments from at least 1911, in state appointments from the middle of 1915, and his influence in procuring favours of all kinds. Here we have a host of witnesses, led by Alexandra Fedorovna herself. I do not include his patently "ghosted" little books of aphorisms and travels; still less any of his missives more than four lines long.

There can be no doubt of Raspoutine's power of healing or of his enormous influence. There can be plenty of doubts about the genuine nature of his religious vocation. De Jonge, relying largely on Maria Raspoutine, has chosen to accept without serious question that Raspoutine experienced a spiritual transformation during his vagabond period. He thinks Raspoutine's enemies

hated him because he was a peasant who had forced his way into Imperial favour (this was one of Gregory's favourite themes). Raspoutine's power, he believes, can only be explained by some extraordinary spiritual experience; he exercised, he thinks, a genuine spiritual authority over his devotees. This is crucial. Leaving aside the numerous unhappy psychopaths whom he helped or healed by physical humiliation or possession, the real believers in Raspoutine as a Man of God were in fact limited to a few tragic figures like the Empress and Anna Vyryubova, who refused to listen to the slightest word of scandal about his private life and had themselves experienced his healing powers — the

intrigues that launched these figures; he merely backed, with his extraordinary influence, the man he knew the Empress wanted at the instance of a varied crew of devious and irresponsible wire-pullers.

It is no accident that Raspoutine left no cult behind him, among a people notorious for their veneration of long-dead or quite preposterous impostors. He was no martyr in the people's eyes; his only genuine mourners were a handful of unhappy women, an inventive daughter and the disappointed dregs of Petrograd's self-seeking underworld, many of whom felt they had been let down by the inability of this false prophet to foresee his end or to defend himself. As for the



Tea and more than sympathy? This 1914 photograph, accompanied by doggerel verses by the right-wing politician V. M. Furshkevich, was widely distributed to discredit Raspoutine. In his book reviewed here (from which the picture is taken) Alex de Jonge writes "Raspoutine appears to be surrounded by smart society women, and yet this is not the case." ... With the exception of Mouzina Golovina (seated fourth from the left) ... the women were all unknowns.

Empress in the case of the Tsarevich, Vyryubova whom Raspoutine saved from her apparent death-bed after her frightful railway accident in January 1915; the rest, and these were the great majority, were self-seeking humbugs.

Chronology is also vital in determining the Empress's part in infuencing ministerial changes with Raspoutine's help. There were noisy pre-war agitations against Raspoutine, but these mattered little for Russia as opposed to the Imperial family, since the Empress took a very minor part in politics before the middle of 1915. The first two volumes of her correspondence with the Emperor (1894-1914) were translated into Russian, ready for the press in 1923, but have never been released for publication by the Soviet Government, whereas volumes 3-5 (1914-17) came out in 1923-27. The reason for this selectivity is obvious; publication of the first two volumes would confirm what is already clear from the published letters of April 1914 — in 1894 with two short intervals — in 1894 when the Emperor Alexander III was dying and 1900, when the Emperor Nicholas II was dangerously ill in the Crimea — the Empress took no part in great affairs outside the Church before July 1915. It was only then, when Raspoutine's position was in serious danger, not from journalists or churchmen or Duma members, but from an apparently strong ministry, the dismissal of the Grand Duke Nicholas as Commander-in-Chief and then, with the Emperor safely relegated to the High Command, took the reins of government into her unsteady hands; Dzhuravskiy, Samarin and Shcherbatov, were successively dismissed (followed by many other loyal servants of Russia) and A. N. Khvostov, Sturmer, Protopopov, Raev were installed in office, simply because they were wrongly trusted to be able to protect "Our Friend". It was then that loathing for the hypocritical adventurer Raspoutine and the bishops he promoted or protected turned into horror at his influence over ministerial nominations, and the monarchy was fatally shaken by the incompetence of the ministers he backed even more than by the alleged negotiations of a "German" Empress with the enemy. Not that Raspoutine "initiated" the

peasant masses (pace de Jonge and the couple of dubious references he quotes), they were quite unmoved.

It is not hard to disentangle the basic facts about Raspoutine's rôle during this last fatal period; there are so many witnesses. He had been on the defensive since 1910-12 and from July 1915 was constantly on the alert, though never able to behave discreetly, restrain his appetites (de Jonge seems to find this admirable) or refrain from opposed to the Imperial family, since the Empress took a very minor part in politics before the middle of 1915. The first two volumes of her correspondence with the Emperor (1894-1914) were translated into Russian, ready for the press in 1923, but have never been released for publication by the Soviet Government, whereas volumes 3-5 (1914-17) came out in 1923-27. The reason for this selectivity is obvious; publication of the first two volumes would confirm what is already clear from the published letters of April 1914 — in 1894 with two short intervals — in 1894 when the Emperor Alexander III was dying and 1900, when the Emperor Nicholas II was dangerously ill in the Crimea — the Empress took no part in great affairs outside the Church before July 1915. It was only then, when Raspoutine's position was in serious danger, not from journalists or churchmen or Duma members, but from an apparently strong ministry, the dismissal of the Grand Duke Nicholas as Commander-in-Chief and then, with the Emperor safely relegated to the High Command, took the reins of government into her unsteady hands; Dzhuravskiy, Samarin and Shcherbatov, were successively dismissed (followed by many other loyal servants of Russia) and A. N. Khvostov, Sturmer, Protopopov, Raev were installed in office, simply because they were wrongly trusted to be able to protect "Our Friend". It was then that loathing for the hypocritical adventurer Raspoutine and the bishops he promoted or protected turned into horror at his influence over ministerial nominations, and the monarchy was fatally shaken by the incompetence of the ministers he backed even more than by the alleged negotiations of a "German" Empress with the enemy. Not that Raspoutine "initiated" the

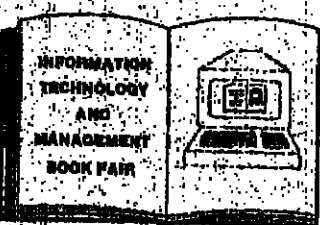
appointment in July 1915 he looked on, rightly, as a dangerous personal threat, something that caused him to incite the Empress into furious counter-action. He was only interested in personalities who could be trusted to protect him, both in Petrograd and in his home Siberian diocese of Tobolsk, where both the bishop (Varnava) and the governor (Orlovsky-Tanaevsky) were (although he never trusted Varnava) his loyal servants, as well as being men with damaged reputations, easy to displace if necessary. Apart from this, his daily business was with shameless wire-pullers or speculators from the banks or stock exchange, or seekers after jobs and contracts, pardons and exemptions, permits to reside in Petrograd (for Jews), or go abroad or get a "cushy" posting in the rear. This was the lucrative source of endless parties, with unlimited madeira, dancing, visits to the gypsies, women of all kinds (his "rather fast life" in Maria Raspoutine's words in 1925), from the effects of which his marvellous actor's powers of physical control could always give him quick recovery and apparent sobriety on a summons from Tsarskoe. It is impossible to believe that this nauseating rake and conjuror had ever had a spiritual vocation, let alone a rational policy of any kind, whether on peace or land or justice for the Jews.

The question constantly recurs. Was Raspoutine ever genuinely concerned with anything but his personal pleasure, money, safety and advancement? Both Alex de Jonge and Andrei Amalrik are anxious to believe in his erstwhile simplicity, his true conversion, his sincerity and worthwhile "policies". De Jonge piles up damaging testimony yet is tireless in excuses, pitiless in rejecting hostile witnesses as "foolish busybodies, gossips" and the like. He compares him to the anti-hero of the sadistic French romance, *The Story of O*, but manages to write about his "errors of judgment" and his "wasted talent". It is impossible to follow these apologists in their arguments. The evidence on behalf of Raspoutine is far too tainted, flimsy, contradictory, disgusting; the evidence against him far too damning. Genuine healing gifts and power over women, animals and children were his assets and he exploited them to the full; the accident that he should have encountered the Tsarevich at the period of his haemophilic crisis was his gift from Heaven — his mantle of Eliza, as Beletsky called it; the rest consisted in a pair of piercing eyes, complete self-confidence, powerful natural acting of a kind quite common in Russia and a limitless flow of Delphic or ambivalent hypocritical religious jargon. Once he had obtained the confidence of the Empress it was absolute; he could allow himself anything and nothing could shake him till he had discredited the throne, undermined the administration and destroyed himself. This is no legend. The truth about him is far worse than any lie.

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Measured muddle

Edward Blishen

TED WALKER

The High Path
166pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£7.95.
0 7100 9302 0

Ted Walker's account of his childhood and adolescence is a book that imposes on the reader the happiest of halting journeys. Partly this is because a poet is at work, writing good clear prose but still having the poet's habit of not allowing words to report for duty half-sleep. So the milkman of Mr Walker's childhood has "a massive whiteness" that extended even to his "bottle fingers"; the rollers of his mother's mangle "spat the water out"; the letter box was a "viciously springy flap which yelped like the jaws of a tiger at the advent of news from outside". It is also because here is recollection wakefully precise as to the experience of all the senses, so that, in the middle of a paragraph or a sentence, at the drop of a word, the reader may find himself wandering off on some reminiscent journey of his own, inspired by as good an account of a smell or a taste as he is likely to meet with.

There is a passage describing Walker's father's way with his evening meal, seen through the adoringly watchful eyes of his small son. It is exact, very funny – and perfectly knit into the story, for Walker has that other gift of the poet, which is to see, in some compact fashion, the meaning in a memory. A page or so earlier he has described the rich muddle of the drawer in which his mother kept her sewing, and now it strikes him that the source of my tendency towards woolly romanticism may be traced to the exuberant chaos of my mother's sewing drawer, then my regard for orderly techniques and craftsmanship of form stems from observing my father eat. To the probable truth of this observation, the whole book, making sense of the brimming nonsense of a life, provides witness.

Perhaps a poet is made more often than not by his arrival at the dead centre of a whole tissue of opposites. The precise was represented in Walker's life not only by his father, a carpenter who had died in the starving 1930s from Birmingham and made his home on the Sussex coast, at Shoreham, but also by his grandfather, a grocer, "perky and indomitable", a master at making little parcels of exact weights of butter, a wizard with the bacon cutter. His father divided his wages among a mantlepieceful of assorted tins, but seems to have been free of the worst concomitants of precision: meanness and authoritarianism. He had some difficulty in being a father in any conventional sense, and it is easy to understand why Walker writes so lovingly of the man who, while he shaved and quizzed and was quizzed by his small son, invented a form of backyard cricket which took full advantage of "the amazing geometry of the multiple bounce" and called a noisy neighbour Peninsilla.

because she was always sticking her long neck out to see. He was an old-fashioned autodidact. At the point in adolescence when pain has to be given and taken, the giver found himself a man-like boy, and remembers that the taker was a most boyish man. There is a sharp moment when, feeling himself a misunderstood romantic, the sixteen-year-old Ted suddenly discovers that, if there is a romantic around the place, it is his exact-minded father.

It was a family given to laughter; his father and brother can still make him weep with it, and he mourns the death of an uncle who had the same gift. He pays tribute to the effect of *Beano*, which "furnished my private world with a mythology, a morality and a philosophy still much to my taste". He claims to be able to recognize "the true Beauite (as readily as I can a Leavite) among a crowd of educated strangers". It is a moment in the book when a reader may gather together various ideas he has been accumulating about Walker's profound Englishness. This is a compulsion of extreme laughter, and of extreme melancholy (alone in woodland during lunch-breaks at his grammar school with its "phony renown", he became aware for the first time of his poetic territory, and wept steadily); of particular kinds of honesty and of the desire, which may become the ability, to make bridges between the stolidly sensible and the visionary. It rests also on a habit, when the chips are down, of choosing the matter-of-fact rather than the matter-of-fancy, for example, in politics, where Walker finds "an outlook of amiable pragmatism" preferable to one of sullen Utopianism. *Lord Snooty and his Pals* (especially in the case of poets) to equate such a posture with philistinism and insularity: which is perhaps a particularly foolish way of depriving oneself of the enjoyment of a rich and home-grown vigour, as sensitive as any.

In the crowded brevity of *The High Path* there is also much about the war as seen by a child: it was "conducted, on the wireless, for adults: nothing to do with me". Or about the growth of a poet – in respect of words, for example: a good teacher or two, and he was displaying in his essays "newly acquired words, like trays of gems". (Though he thinks poor teaching may be best for an artist, as he believes that advised to become a labourer than a teacher.) In his celebration of the beach of Shoreham, Ted Walker writes beautifully about the sea – wishing he had as many words for sand, rock and seaweed as the Eskimos have for snow. But perhaps he writes best of all about people, including his marvelous neighbours, the Morning Shouter, the Firewood King, smelly Mrs Hammack, and Mr Daugherty who came home after fourteen years of inexplicable absence and mentioned (as an afterthought) that he had been out looking for a job.

His father had a term for anything beautifully done: *unpolly poo*. There seems no better term for *The High Path*.

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Champagne churchman

Gerard Irvine

MERVYN STOCKWOOD

Chantebury Ring: An Autobiography
223pp. Hodder and Stoughton.
£9.95.
0 340 27568 5 (Paperback, Sheldon Press, £5.95.)

In the past four centuries the Church of England has produced its fair share of colourful clergymen, but few colourful bishops. Doubtless the cause can be found in the varied systems of appointment. Private patrons can afford to take risks, but politicians naturally favour the safe candidate. So while there have been many competent bishops, good administrators and pastoral men, some learned theologians and a handful of saints and prophets, few have been in any way flamboyant. One of those few is surely the recently retired Bishop of Southwark. Indeed it says much for the working of that church whose institutional life he so detests, that he was made a bishop at all.

Mervyn Stockwood is certainly colourful. But his autobiography shows that he is not just a dragon-fly: he is a mixture in whom "all contraries meet in one". A Firbankian triphibian, but with a social conscience; in the last resort a reluctant cavalier, his ministry has reached out to circles to which most priests have little entrée. A bon viveur and urbane companion, he is also a man of prayer to whom the Mass is the still centre of his life. A critic of received ideas in theology and churchmanship, he is at the same time a sucker for the psychic.

The paradoxical in his character is brought out in this disarmingly honest autobiography. From one whose life has been so involved in public controversy – and, it must be admitted, the title of his book may seem an odd choice. But the choice provides a key to his complex personality. To him Chantebury Ring, a secluded and numerous beauty spot on the South Downs, is a symbol of the peace he has not found in the Church – perhaps never wanted to find in his antagonism to the stifling ecclesiastical institution. To the reader it may be a symbol of the less public, but more profound, aspect of his character.

When offered the see of Southwark he made one of his pilgrimages to the Ring. "On that occasion," he writes, "there was a particularly beautiful sunset, a flaming red sky. As I looked spellbound, deep black stormclouds appeared. I took it as an augury." As well he might. His tenure of the see, as described by Geoffrey Fisher as "the Cinderella diocese", was stormy and outstanding. His ambition was "to bring a little fire into the diocese". Both alcoholically he was always leaving bottles of champagne on people – and otherwise, he certainly succeeded. Under him, Cinderella walked to the ball. In a short while Southwark occupied the vanguard of "progressive" dioceses. Whether admired or execrated, "South Bank religion" became a catchword. Doubtless this was in part due to the quality of the men he attracted; but the lead and panache were his.

His background was Anglo-Catholic but, as he makes clear, even in his boyhood he rejected its narrower legitimate manifestations. After *Horst*, Cambridge, and Westcott House, he was ordained to St. Matthew's, Moorfield, in east Bristol. There he stayed, as curate and later as vicar, for twenty years, and there he met for the first time the appalling state of the life before the welfare state. The result was predictable: the unthinking conservatism became, the emotionally charged socialists. He was lucky that the local MP happened to be that devout Christian, Sir Stafford Cripps. A close friendship grew up between the two; and when Cripps became Chancellor of the Exchequer, Stockwood was given the freedom of the City. Elected to the House of Commons, he met and charmed the Attorney-General, Lord Hailsham, and the other political luminaries. Henceforward his horizon was not limited to his proletarian parishioners (though he was a faithful parish priest)

but extended to members of the social and intellectual élite far beyond the boundaries of Bristol. But it was they who sought out him, rather than he them. They found in him a sophisticated sensibility none too common in clergymen; while he for his part clearly enjoyed the cachet and glamour of friendship with the great.

Early in his ministry he realized that traditional Anglo-Catholicism cut no ice in Moorfield, so he developed the parish along ecumenical and liturgical lines which, although common enough now, were thought to be appallingly revolutionary thirty years ago, and elicited violent opposition from both Catholic and Protestant diehards. The future Bishop of Southwark was forming within the Moorfield chrysalis.

In 1955 he was presented to the living of Great St Mary, the University Church of Cambridge. Church life there had been at a low ebb for years; but within a few weeks it was restored to throbbing vigour. Within a year it had become the foremost religious force in the University, and the centre of that Cambridge-based renaissance of liberal Catholicism which has transformed the ethos of religion in England in the last quarter-century.

His time at Cambridge was perhaps the happiest and most successful of his life. Certainly his chapter on it is the most lively in the book. But it only lasted four years. In 1959 he was

elevated to the purple. For him it was no easy transition. He had no experience of diocesan administration, and was increasingly exasperated by the proximity of the machinery. A fierce critic of the establishment, for whom "rules and regulations have their place in the list of priorities, but near the bottom", he now found himself with the spokesman of the ecclesiastical institution. Constantly involved in controversy (not always of his own seeking), he was not at his best when opposed. He could be ruthless and unfair to his opponents, and he made mistakes he has been humble enough to admit them.

He was a superb host, entertaining widely – he claims to have entertained over seven thousand people to meals during his time at Southwark. Nevertheless the autobiography gives the impression of a basically lonely man. Inevitably, by the end of twenty years he had become something of an institution, almost a figure of the establishment he both detests and enjoys. He has been consistently on the side of moral, political and ecclesiastical radicalism: the difference is that by now this has become respectable. On a recent visit to Chantebury Ring (photographed in colour on the dust cover) the sky is blue and the weather serene. Can we take this too as a symbol and an augury, of his retirement in Bath?

Flyweight and over

Vernon Scannell

JOHN BURROWES

Benny Lynch: The Life and Times of a Fighting Legend
224pp. Edinburgh: Mainstream.
£7.95.
0 906391 32 6

Benny Lynch was born in 1913 in the Gorbals, between the wars a dark ghetto for the native Scottish, Jewish and Irish underprivileged, a savage place in a savage time from which the only possibilities of escape for the young were through drink, crime or the licensed formal violence of professional boxing. Those were the days when every town of any size in Britain possessed at least one venue for regular boxing tournaments and professional fighters would engage in bouts of eight, ten or fifteen rounds, with only a few days' respite between each; only the very few boxes of championship class could expect purses of more than five or ten pounds for each contest.

As a schoolboy in 1935 I can remember seeing a newsreel of Lynch winning the Flyweight Championship of the World from Jackie Brown of Manchester by stopping him inside two rounds. Lynch was the archetypal 1930s professional fighter, small, stocky, slick hair centre-parted, pug-nosed and cauliflower-eared. Between 1931 and 1938 he took part in over one hundred contests, losing only a handful and most of those in his novice days; at his best he was one of the finest flyweights the world has known. He was immensely strong for an eight-stoner, and his left hook carried the power of a much bigger man but with no sacrifice of speed. He held the World title for nearly three years, and surrendered it not to the American, Jackie Jurish, but to the ring but on the scales, for Lynch was now neglecting his training and drinking too much, with the result that he weighed in at a shocking six-and-a-half pounds over the flyweight limit. He had to pay £500 as a forfeit and to relinquish his title but Jurish agreed that the contest should go ahead at catch weights. It was a sporting decision but not a wise one. Lynch knocked him out in the twelfth round.

That was the last time the great fighter was on display. An embeswelled parody of the man he had been took part in two more official contests, in both of which he was defeated, and for the rest of his life he was a fairground attraction, where he was exhibited more as a historical curiosity than as an active pugilist. The alcoholism which had started his decline finally

destroyed him and he died, friendless and destitute, at the age of thirty-four in 1946. His marriage in 1935 had lasted effectively a bare four months; his reign as World Champion ended in humiliation. It is a sad story but potentially an absorbing one. So what has John Burrowes made of it? The answer, I am afraid, is, "A mess".

It would be possible, I suppose, for a writer of the quality of Thomas Kenally to distill from this material a dramatic and persuasive story which would be a compound of invention and documentary fact. Burrowes has, it seems, set out to write a conventional biography but he has loaded it with curiously unconvincing direct speech not only from the principals but from anonymous background figures. This from an account of Lynch's first contest at the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow, before the young boxer was accustomed to seeing affluent ring-siders and their wives:

"Hey Benny," said one of the seconds, "Have ya seen a' the fuckin' penguins that have come to see ya? An' their tarts are a' drolled up in long dresses. Maybe they think y' gonnle give them a dance we man."

Benny laughed. It was his kind of humour. Nevertheless he was impressed at what he saw. He liked style. There was no style in a muffer over a shirt without a collar because you couldn't afford the collar or the tie topped by a cloth cap with a greasy skip. That was the way they had to dress for they had nothing else. But if you had it, why not flaunt it? Nothing wrong with a bit of effort, to look smart, he thought. And a lot of the new colourful gear men were starting to wear was just the kind of stuff he fancied.

All through Burrowes's book we find this kind of irrelevant, entirely unbelievable reporting. That vague "one of the seconds" almost insists on disbelief and, of course, no-one could possibly know what the fighter was thinking at that time. Through his hectoring, comic-strip jokiness, his gross sentimentalizing and almost total neglect of fact or of what is truly important about his subject Burrowes has managed to drain his narrative of all sense of reality. A pity, because Benny Lynch's story deserves much better.

Sagittarius Rising, Cecil Lewis's classic memoir of his time as a pilot during the First World War and after, has recently been reissued (332pp. Heinemann, Peter Davies, £7.95, 0 432 08605 5). On its original publication in 1926, the *72s* reviewer noted that the book "will carry the reader through the War in the air, giving him fragmentary but penetrating glimpses of extreme youth in action."

WILLIAM V. O'BRIEN

The Conduct of Just and Limited War

495pp. New York: Praeger (distributed by Holt-Saunders Ltd, Eastbourne). £32.25.
0 03 059346 8

No university in the world can be less of an ivory tower than Georgetown in Washington DC, with its notable interest in, and many means of influencing, public policy. No surprise, therefore, that it is a senior Georgetown professor who has written the book that should definitively put an end to the charge that just war talk in these tough times is idealistic, or unrelated to political and military realities.

Not that this charge has ever been wholly fair. The gap between theory and practice has often been in the mind of the beholder. But undeniably some parts of the international law of war, the practical derivative from just war principles, have at times been less clearly instructive than others, and the way has thus been left open for the impatient, the desperate and the brutal to deny that this or that (inconvenient) part of it existed. Another difficulty has been the distance often kept by governing and military élites from outsiders, no matter how expert or anxious to help these "outsiders" might be or how good it might be for public relations if they were allowed to do so. William V. O'Brien's work has not suffered from this difficulty, at any rate. It is not just a part of Georgetown life, it is also part of Washington life, that academics, journalists and other interested parties outside government service mix more with those inside than is the custom in many other countries, including this one.

Professor O'Brien has not only read most of the literature that matters (his very fine bibliography is only of English-language works, but that cannot have affected the product), he has also worked closely over many years with the international law experts in the Pentagon (especially Waldemar Solf and W. Hays Parks) and his text had the advantage of the comments of General Schweitzer and others of the US Army Directorate of Strategy, Plans and Policy. O'Brien is his own man and one cannot believe that he has written anything merely for the sake of being understood, let alone liked, by the military, but it is important to recognize at the outset that he does know what armed servicemen think; as a serious student of war, he understands the conditions under which they have to act; as a professor of government, he knows his way around the labyrinth of civil-military relations as well as the corridors of a great power preparing for war or conducting it. He

has lived with these matters and published good books and articles about them for thirty years. Now he has written the book of a lifetime.

It is also the book of an embattled American patriot and Catholic. O'Brien has been no detached or dispassionate observer of his country's international ups and downs since, in the Second World War, it helped to save the world not just for freedom as he sees it, but for freedom or communism. The Vietnam years appear to have left scars on him. Certain Catholic developments regarding the pursuit of peace and justice since the Second Vatican Council may worry him too. It is therefore all the more admirable that the juridical science and exegesis in the book can be so easily separated from the frankly expressed political applications, some of which are questionable.

Moral theory and deadly practice are not to be joined together without argument. O'Brien is not a man to dodge argument. We shall have to do a bit of arguing with him before we finish. But what matters most is the magnificent objective substance of the book, an exposition of just war principles on three levels: as ethical theory, founded (so far as we Euro-Americans are concerned) in the natural law tradition from Aquinas and his successors through Victoria and Grotius to Vattel; as the source of international law regarding the legitimacies of going to war and then fighting it – the classic *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*; and as close correlate of the concept of limited war developed, chiefly by American writers, within the past generation.

The practical applications O'Brien demonstrates with a fearless thoroughness hitherto unknown in the literature. Beyond certain not unfamiliar cautionary aspects (such as, alas for British pride, the British strategic bombing offensive in the Second World War) he scrutinizes his own country's involvement and operational conduct in that war, in Korea and in Indo-China, testing it item by item against his just war criteria and judging frankly where it didn't satisfy them equally with where it did; not only *ius in bello* matters, which are relatively easy to do on their own, but also *ius ad bellum* ones – a lot more delicate and tricky; and finally, as a sort of *pièce de résistance*, the two together, inquiring how far shortcomings in the one may be excused on account of nobilities in the other. Then, after a useful summary of the history and nature of limited war theory, he tests his country again against its criteria, in Korea and Vietnam, and throws in the Yom Kippur war for good measure.

The correlation of (analytically

distinct) limited war with just war is a great and novel feature of this book, likely to need explanation more on this side of the Atlantic than on the other; even though we have just fought a classic limited war ourselves. Total war having proved so horrible in 1941-45 and threatening to prove totally disastrous if ever it should happen again, American brains began soon after 1945 to give a lot of thought to how their country could protect its vital interests and maintain collective security in more limited ways. Experience stimulated thought when the United States actually found itself fighting limited wars in Korea and Vietnam. An enormous body of literature about limited war developed, with which O'Brien is thoroughly familiar and in which he takes a special interest because limited war thus described has so many similarities to just war as he would wish to see it conducted; their main point of contact being around the central military principle of economy of force, which he lucidly discusses.

He is the more anxious to complete this equation because, tough and unsentimental as well as religious and political, he cuts his just war theory from whole cloth and believes that war sometimes has to be fought. This is an aspect of the matter too often allowed to evaporate. A case can indeed be argued that no war nowadays can be just, but O'Brien rejects it. Here, as so often, he bites the bullet which others swallow or spit out. War, he stoutly argues, can be just, justified and justifiable. The point however is not to be proud or passionate about it but to keep it limited. His own country's record in Korea and Vietnam he believes to have been just and limited in many essential respects, and therefore on the whole (Korea admittedly more surely so than Vietnam) nothing to be ashamed of. Other countries could with advantage learn from these examples; though O'Brien does not minimize the difficulties of observing such limitations in what he insists are terms "Revolutionary / Counterinsurgency Wars", a close critical analysis of which fills two chapters (and where, distastefully, he concludes that military necessity may justify torture).

Mention of Vietnam is to kick the wasp's nest, and to bring us in conclusion to the politically arguable aspects of the book. O'Brien knows, though he perhaps does not like to admit, how much may be said against his country's intervention in Vietnam and what it did when it got there. Many would conclude that, *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello* taken together, the balance does not come out on the credit side for Vietnam as it does for Korea or, *a fortiori*, that so unlimited Second World War. But however unfortunate the United States' recent experiences

may have been, the principle remains (for all but high-principled pacifists) unchallenged: if only some wars are all wrong, some of the others must be all right.

The big question then is, in what circumstances does the sophisticated application of just and limited war criteria make going to war necessary? No up-to-date presentation of those criteria is fuller or clearer than O'Brien's, no review of the obligations it might impose on a great power more conscientious or, dare one say, more anguished. No trace here of any of that dreadful love of war which has for so long disfigured our culture (not ours alone, of course), no casual neglect of war's real costs. But when all that is said and done, the author's conviction is that wars will still have to be fought, and the United States will have to fight them. He unhesitatingly goes on to say why.

It is at this point that the reader may begin to shift uneasily in his seat and even once or twice sit bolt upright in alarm – recalling, perhaps, that until Ronald Reagan made his ambassadorial appointments, another professional door at Georgetown was labelled "Kirkpatrick". The war O'Brien has in contemplation are not just wars of simple self-defence, such as may be the case for most of us middle and lower-rank powers, but wars of intervention requiring more complicated and devious arguments to support them. For the Korean war O'Brien easily, for Vietnam with much greater difficulty, makes out "collective self-defence" justifications, under Article 51 of the Charter of the UN. But there are several other grounds on which justification for military intervention may be made out and they are all in this book, for the political wing of O'Brien's ethical-legal-military discourse is to help his country get over the trauma of its Vietnam defeat, to assure it (and, if they will listen, its allies) that it did well to intervene then, and to encourage it to intervene again on the future occasions which will, he does not doubt, present themselves.

What those occasions are expected to be is clear enough from the scattering of passages throughout the book in which his *Weltanschauung* appears. It seems to be a conservative Catholic one, to which "revolution", with little further inquiry made, is a dirty word, and a reductionist anti-communist one which regards our world as an arena where, since 1945, forces of relative light, headed by the United States, have faced and must confront forces of absolute dark, headed by the Soviet Union. "Containment" was a worthy policy, the "domino theory" not so stupid after all. The "Free World" (only once, on p. 211, does O'Brien qualify it as "so-called") has its rotten régimes, granted, but at least they are "reversible".

Communism thus indiscriminately viewed is seen as dyed-in-the-wool hostile to the values of the Christian

culture and civilization which produced the just war tradition and the United States, and communism is not, O'Brien is sure, "reversible". It is also, he is equally sure, inherently and permanently aggressive. Where there are not already revolutions, it will inspire them; no recognition here of the independent sources of revolution among suffering peoples yearning for a fairer share of this world's goods and for freedom in such forms as mean most to them. Where there are revolutions, communism will support them; no recognition here that such support may only be acceptable *faute de mieux*, perhaps (if it is anywhere, in central or southern America) to assist defence against covert or oblique American interventions by such means as "destabilization", support of counter-revolutionary terrorists, etc. So communism must always be opposed and when necessary fought in, O'Brien hopes, the carefully limited way he cares about so much and expounds so well. The United States without its allies, whose moral fibre may not be up to it, must guard itself again for the struggle temporarily abandoned in the early 1970s.

What this might mean in practice would depend on a multitude of factors, among which one must hope the influence of Professor O'Brien will be great, for although his voice is scarcely needed to point out all the threats Americans may perceive to their "values" around the world, there are none who can argue more persuasively for restraint in the conduct of war. Whatever his politics, the scholar who urgently wants to show people how properly to work out "the true relationship between politics, war, morality and law" (p. 360) and who is so superbly equipped to do so shines like a bright star in a darkling sky.

Edited by Gérard Chaliand, *Guerrilla Strategies: An Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan* (353pp. University of California Press, £21.30, 0 520 04444 4) is an anthology of writings on revolutionary warfare and counterinsurgency, "covering almost all the major struggles of the modern world". The book is, in Chaliand's words, "concerned less with the history and more with the strategy" of guerrilla warfare, "analyzing its underlying principles and their connection with the ultimate goal, political change". In a useful introduction, he points out that while guerrilla warfare is not a new phenomenon, guerrilla techniques being recorded in ancient Egypt and China, mentioned in the Bible, and described, sometimes at length, by classical historians like Polybius, Plutarch, Josephus, Herodotus and Tacitus, there was no treatment of the subject of the "little war" as a whole until the eighteenth century, when La Mière de Corvey wrote *Des partisans et des corps irréguliers*. *Guerrilla Studies* is divided into two parts: "Stories" – of particular wars; and "Analyses".

Communism thus indiscriminately viewed is seen as dyed-in-the-wool hostile to the values of the Christian

STALINISM: ITS IMPACT ON RUSSIA AND THE WORLD

EDITED BY G R URBAN

"The first thing to be said about this symposium is that it is a personal triumph for the editor. Dr Urban has just about perfected the hybrid art of the interview in depth designed to illuminate the matter under discussion not only through the conscious thinking of the interviewee but also with a dazle of oblique reflections bouncing back from his prejudices and unconscious assumptions."

Edward Crankshaw, *The Observer*

"By his implacable prodding of men who knew Stalin and of leading scholars of Soviet history he provides us with the best support we have yet had in coming to grips with the realities of Stalinism."

Nora Beloff, *The Daily Telegraph*

The interviewees are: Bao-Ruo-wang, Boris Bazhanov, Milovan Djilas, W. Averell Harriman, George F. Kennan, Leszek Kolakowski, Roderick MacFarquhar, Theodor Pragel, Robert C. Tucker, Adam B. Ulam

Epilogue by Leonard Schapiro

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Papal pressures

John S. Conway

PIERRE BLET, ROBERT A. GRAHAM, ANGELO MARTINI and BURKHARD SCHWENNER (Editors)

Actes et documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale Volume XI: Janvier 1944-Mai 1945
787pp. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

The final volume of documents from the Vatican archives for the period of the Second World War covers the diplomatic activities of the Papacy during the seventeen last months of the European conflict. Prior to the capture of Rome by Allied forces in June 1944, the principal concern of Pope Pius XII and his diplomats was to prevent the engulfment of Rome itself in the devastating battles that were taking place only a few miles to the south, leading to the destruction of Monte Cassino in February 1944. Continuous appeals were directed to Berlin, London and Washington. The neutral powers, especially Spain and Ireland, were mobilized to press for the safety of Rome. Catholic archbishops around

the world were organized to bring pressure to bear where possible. The response of the Western allies was more than cautious, and no commitments were given. Not until the end of May did the Germans unilaterally agree to pull their troops out of the capital, and leave Rome as an open city. But the Papal representatives could at least claim some credit for this relief.

Less encouragement was found in the subsequent months in the search for a peace settlement. The Allies stubbornly refused to abandon their policy of unconditional surrender and refused to consider any negotiations with Nazi representatives. The Pope was obliged to recognize that his ambition of securing a negotiated peace through his diplomatic skill was no longer realistic. When finally, in March 1945, the German foreign Minister tried to enlist the Vatican in peace moves towards the Allies, these were rejected as no more than an attempt to prolong the Nazi régime. The Vatican was reduced to strenuous warnings against the prevalent optimism about the post-war intentions of the Soviet Union, and refused to accept the American point of view that Stalin's co-operation was worth

courting, or that Russian declarations about freedom of religion in the newly occupied areas, such as Poland and Lithuania, were evidence of a reformed communism. The Vatican's scepticism was soon proved to be correct.

The course of military events had left the Vatican unscathed, but had severely curtailed any chance of its diplomatic effectiveness. The Holy See was not consulted about any of the major decisions for the post-war world. Still more damaging was the growing evidence that the moral values for which the Church campaigned had been ruthlessly trampled on. The Pope and his advisers could only look forward with fear and trembling to the tasks of post-war reconstruction. It was only a partial comfort to claim that the Vatican had upheld throughout its neutrality and dedication to the cause of peace and justice.

This last publication has been edited, as were the previous ten volumes, with meticulous care, and now completes the series begun in 1967. Together they provide an indispensable record with which to assess the policies and influence of the Vatican during the tumultuous years of the Second World War.

commentary

Recent sales of books and MSS

Sarah Bradford

The Ashendene Press (1895-1935) is one of the more highly rated of the English private presses, not quite of the rank, perhaps, of Dove's or Kilmacott, but eagerly sought after by collectors as was demonstrated by the sale of the John A. Saks collection at Christie's, New York, on November 19. The Saks collection of works from the Ashendene Press was indeed the finest and the most complete ever to appear for sale, carefully put together over a considerable period of time. It included all the "Books" issued by the Press (as distinct from the "Minor Pieces" and "Ephemera" which were also represented) and all the volumes available by subscription in vellum copies.

The Press was founded by Charles Harry St John Hornby (1867-1946) who was both its printer and proprietor; suitably the first lot of the collection was Hornby's own printer's copy of the first Ashendene Press book, printed from his grandfather's journal of a visit to Paris in the spring of 1815. "None of the books from my press has given me quite the same thrill as did this, its first-born, when it arrived home from the binders", Hornby wrote, although admitting "The presswork of this book is of an exceedingly poor quality, only excusable by the fact that it was the first effort". Hornby's "first-born" sold for £3,300 to Bromer. A far more lavish production, *The Song of Solomon*... 1902, one of forty copies on vellum illuminated throughout by Florence Kingsford, who later became Mrs Sydney Cockerell, realized \$13,200 to the New York dealer, Philip C. Duschnes. Miss Kingsford's sub-praphic illumination might not be to everyone's taste; most collectors would prefer the more restrained style of the folio Ashendene Dante, the star of the collection, one of only six copies on vellum of *Tutte le Opere*, 1909, and the only one to have appeared for sale either in England or the United States. The Dante, printed in Subiaco type with initial capitals designed by Grafty Hewitt and woodcuts by W. H. Hooper, took three years to complete; bound in white pigskin probably by Douglas Cockerell for the W. H. Smith bindery, it fetched the top price, \$55,000, to Mages. The rarity and quality of the vellum volumes from the Press were reflected in the prices: \$35,000 also paid by Mages for a copy of *Malory*, one of eight on vellum printed in 1913, the first Ashendene book to use blue capitals alternately with red and the last with woodcuts by Hooper, while a beautifully simple *Decameron*, without illustrations, in a green crushed levant morocco binding, probably again by Cockerell, was sold to Heritage Bookshop for \$19,800. The printing of the *Decameron* began in 1913 but was interrupted by the closing of the press during the First World War and was only completed in 1920. Also in the sale were a miniature (35 by 25mm) copy of Horace's *Carmen Saepulchra*, printed on Japanese paper and bound in niger morocco for the library of Queen Mary's Doll's house in 1923 (\$23,000 to Bromer), six original woodcut blocks from six of the Press books (\$2,640 to Mages) and five autograph letters by Hornby to the bibliographer C. S. Tomkinson, including one written in the last year of the Press, dated September 3, 1935: "Yes, I do feel very sad that this is my last book".

On November 24, Sotheby's, New York, achieved a world record price for a Hebrew book, \$143,000 for the celebrated Prague Haggadah, the most famous illustrated edition of the Passover Haggadah, printed on vellum in Prague by Gershom Cohen in 1527. This copy was in fact "irretrievably lacking one leaf, formally a serious defect, but compensated for by the rarity of the book, this being the only vellum copy of the Prague Haggadah to appear at auction. It was bought by the Valmadonna Trust, one of the largest collections of Hebrew books and manuscripts in private hands. High

prices were also paid for manuscripts: a fifteenth-century compilation of the various texts including a work by the important thirteenth-century Kabbalist, Aboulafia, was bought for a French institution for \$17,500, and a Megillat Esther (Scroll of the Book of Esther) by Francesco Grisellini of Venice was sold for \$41,250 to a New York collector. Also in the sale were some good examples of the sought-after Constantinople imprints, early productions of the Diaspora. The first Hebrew printing press in the Ottoman Empire was set up in Constantinople in 1503 by two refugees from Spain, David and Samuel ibn Nachmias; they were soon joined by other Iberian Jewish exiles who also set up presses in Constantinople and Salonika, printing more than 100 titles between 1504 and 1530.

Sotheby's sale of books on Natural History, Science and Medicine in London on November 29 produced a rare and interesting incunabula by another Jewish victim of Iberian persecution, Abraão (Abraham) Zacuto, mathematician and astronomer to the Portuguese king, Manuel I. His *Almanach Perpetuum Coelestium Motuum*, the first scientific and non-religious work to be printed in Portugal, was one of only four works from the press of the Jewish printer, Abraão Samuel d'Orta's at Leiria. d'Orta's began printing at Leiria in 1492, an inauspicious year for Iberian Jewry, and produced Zacuto's almanac, translated from the Hebrew into Latin, in 1496, the year in which King Manuel promised to expel the Jews from Portugal to please his prospective mother-in-law, Isabella of Castile. Forcible conversion was then offered as an alternative to expulsion, Zacuto being one of those who refused; d'Orta's fate is unknown but there were, apparently, no further productions from his press. The Valmadonna Trust acquired Zacuto's *Almanach* which, although incomplete, is of considerable textual interest, for £6,380. In the same sale H. P. Kraus paid £11,000 for Pavlov's *Lectures on the Work of the Principal Digestive Gland* (St Petersburg 1897) with four other works by Pavlov. Copies of this scarce book have recently been appearing from unidentified sources.

Controversy which was nothing to do with provenance surrounded the sale at Sotheby's, London, on December 9 of Anne Boleyn's Psalter for the massive price of £154,000 and the National Heritage Fund and the Victoria and Albert Museum losing out through a bidding confusion to Mages, acting. It was rumoured, for Paul Getty. Executed in either Paris or Rouen between 1529 and 1532, the Psalter is the only manuscript known with certainty to have been written and illuminated for Anne either commissioned by or presented to her by her confidant, the French Ambassador to the English court, Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Bayonne. Seven pages of the manuscript bear Anne's initial "A" in a lozenge with the monogram of Henry VIII, for although they were not yet married, this was the period of Anne's ascendancy when the king was negotiating with the Pope to obtain a divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Anne's role in impelling Henry towards the break with Rome was not negligible, and significantly the Psalter was probably the first Protestant translation of the Bible to reach the English court. The history of the Psalter after Anne's execution in May 1536 is unknown; it must have remained in England at least until the early seventeenth century as the fine embroidery binding is of that period, but there is no record of ownership until 1976 when it appeared in a French sale catalogue and was acquired by the present vendor for the equivalent of £10,000.

In the same sale was a historical document of compelling interest, the *Obj. Book of the Basilica of Monza*. The manuscript, written at the great basilica of Monza, is a record of 500 years of fascinating minutiae and historical events from the mid-twelfth century to the high Renaissance.

including records of book benefactions and several library lending-lists of which several lots were of the highest quality. The top price in the sale, £70,200, was paid by Mages for the Latin Bible, printed in Mainz by Johann Fust and Peter Schöffer in 1462. The Fust and Schöffer Bible is a milestone in the history of printing, being the first dated Bible, the first Bible to bear the printer's name and place and the first book with a printer's device. It was also the first appearance of the Fust-Schöffer Bible type, based on Schöffer's handwriting, and it was subsequently widely imitated. Mages paid £10,720 for a psalter on vellum printed by Peter Schöffer's son, Johann, at Mainz in 1516, copying his father's psalter of 1457, using the same type. This copy, although incomplete, lacking the last three gatherings, was described as being "musically handsome". Quoted as acquired for £8,640 an item of the greatest rarity in early printing, a single leaf printed by Albrecht Pfister at Bamberg, c. 1463. Pfister, the first printer to print in German or any vernacular language, was also the first to use woodcut illustrations in a book printed with movable type. There are no examples of his printing in the British Library, the Bodleian, the Pierpont Morgan or the Huntington Library and this leaf is apparently unrecorded. Interestingly it is printed in the same type as the thirty-six-line Bible which some experts believe Pfister to have printed.

On December 8, Christie's, London, sold books and manuscripts of which several lots were of the highest quality. The top price in the sale, £70,200, was paid by Mages for the Latin Bible, printed in Mainz by Johann Fust and Peter Schöffer in 1462. The Fust and Schöffer Bible is a milestone in the history of printing, being the first dated Bible, the first Bible to bear the printer's name and place and the first book with a printer's device. It was also the first appearance of the Fust-Schöffer Bible type, based on Schöffer's handwriting, and it was subsequently widely imitated. Mages paid £10,720 for a psalter on vellum printed by Peter Schöffer's son, Johann, at Mainz in 1516, copying his father's psalter of 1457, using the same type. This copy, although incomplete, lacking the last three gatherings, was described as being "musically handsome". Quoted as acquired for £8,640 an item of the greatest rarity in early printing, a single leaf printed by Albrecht Pfister at Bamberg, c. 1463. Pfister, the first printer to print in German or any vernacular language, was also the first to use woodcut illustrations in a book printed with movable type. There are no examples of his printing in the British Library, the Bodleian, the Pierpont Morgan or the Huntington Library and this leaf is apparently unrecorded. Interestingly it is printed in the same type as the thirty-six-line Bible which some experts believe Pfister to have printed.

Sesquicentennial

Stephen Koss

Alice in Wonderland
Virginia Theater, New York City

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's birth, Eva Le Gallienne has restaged her legendary production of *Alice in Wonderland*, first presented by her Civic Repertory Theatre in 1932 and revived in 1947. The co-author of the script, she has again directed this adaptation in which she recreates her role of the White Queen. Undaunted by the imminence of her eighty-fourth birthday, Miss Le Gallienne arrives on stage airborne and subsequently sits as splendidly crumpled as ever. Her presence lifts the second half of the entertainment, which otherwise tends to sag.

The adaptation, actually a conflation of Carroll's two classics, allows Alice to wander through the Looking Glass to a world of Carroll characters, all faithfully brought to life from Sir John Tenniel's drawings. The costumes and scenic effects are exactly right, but the sequence - like the Duchess's pig-like infant - may "annoy". Certainly it does not make, for any sense of dramatic progression. "Begin at the beginning, and go on till you come to the end; then stop," commands the King of Hearts. Miss Le Gallienne and her collaborator, Florida Friebus, would have been well advised to heed his injunction.

Still, the Tiny Alice in the audience, bearing no relation to Edward Albee's cryptic creation, sat enraptured throughout. They obviously identified with Kate Burton, shamelessly purveyed as Richard's daughter, who plays the little role to perfection. She smiles wistfully, curls her knees and ankles, recites with crisp diction, and forges a pliable cat and a piglet that squeals on cue. Her own disembodied



"Visez au coeur, belles dames", a plate from George Barbier's *Le Bonheur du Jour* pour 1920, ou les Grâces à la Mode, to be sold at Sotheby's on January 24.

Back to the ball

Harold Hobson

Mr Cinders
King's Head Theatre

Perhaps even Dan Crawford himself did not realize what a dashing thing he was doing in putting on a revival of *Mr Cinders* at the King's Head. For I believe that this *Mr Cinders* is the first professional production of a pre-1930s British musical comedy to be seen in London since 1939. There is no genre of theatrical art so critically despised as the British pre-war musical, despite the fact that not more than two metropolitan cities have ever seen any such thing. It is a truth universally acknowledged that a musical comedy - equipped with vacuous young men in flannels and blazers, flourishing tennis rackets; moving from one great mansion to another; desperately servile to people of title, and bullying

voice sings sweetly from the over-worked amplifiers astride the proscenium.

The live animals are joined by twenty-nine humans, most of whom handle multiple assignments and many of whom double as animals or portions of animal anatomy. The Walrus, like his Carpenter companion and the delightfully shod oysters who trail after them, is a puppet. Humpty Dumpty, whom Alice accurately describes as "one of the most unsatisfactory people I've ever met", is another paper-mâché acquaintance. The Cheshire Cat, whose detachable smile is less emphatic than his rolling eyes, is manipulated by visible wires. The Mock Turtle, portrayed by a well upholstered actor, is the most inspired creation, doubtless because Tenniel so directly inspired him. He croons a hymn to "Beautiful Soup" and dances the lobster quadrille with an agile Gryphon.

A serviceable score is jointly performed by twenty musicians, who run considerable risk of asphyxiation from the heavily scented clouds of smoke that billow from the stage. In any case, the musical contribution is often drowned out by the chatter of young spectators (and the clatter of parents, offering pacifying sweets), corrupted by television. That was not a problem that Miss Le Gallienne faced in 1932, when her multi-media visions of Wonderland must have been totally entralling. It is a tribute to Miss Le Gallienne's taste, as well as to the durability of her conception, that the evening retains its essentially Victorian ingredients as a Duchess in drag and a pantomime tradition. *Alice in Wonderland* is the closest thing in New York to English seasonal fare. It is less than the sum of its redistributed parts. Lewis Carroll would have approved and, one suspects, Charles Ludwidge Dodgson would not have minded.

to servants; making the most piffing jokes; never having heard of sex or politics, but in love with girls of pouting lips and roguish eyes; the whole lot of them bursting into little songs and dances that have nothing to do with advancing the story - must be in want of a knowledge of life. And then, when Mr Crawford puts on just such an entertainment, what happens? That truth turns out to be nothing of the sort; it is nearer to mere pride - and prejudice. For rarely have things which have been condemned without being seen been so ecstatically praised as *Mr Cinders* when seen at last. Are there to be no denunciations of snobbery any more? Do people not care for social relevance any longer? Is it possible that the sociologists in the audience are now uninterested in the question of what exploitation of his workforce brought the millionaire in the play his vast riches? Apparently it is. We are solemnly advised to go to the King's Head and feel the curious experience of our hearts turning over when a poverty-stricken young man (poverty-stricken, but a member of a titled family) tells the skivvy (who is really a great belle, though he does not know it) never to forget that her gloomy Mondays will turn into Tuesdays, may even into her "golden shoes days". What a ridiculous phrase this sounds to the theatre-goers who believe that the theatre is a place for serious thinkers. And yet I must admit there is a light pathos about it that makes it, like a sentence of Thackeray's, linger long in the mind.

Mr Cinders is the story of Cinderella with the sexes changed, with a stolen diamond necklace substituted for the coach and horses, and a bowler hat for the glass slipper; the whole being fortified with such enchanting lyrics (by Clifford Grey and Greer Newman) and tunes (by Vivian Ellis and Richard Myers) as "Greatest Happiness" and "I'm a one-man girl who's looking for a one-girl man". It is all sheer moonshine and impossible romance, but for more than a moment the King's Head makes us believe that it is true, and that its tenderness will last for ever.

Crawford has won a memorable victory against all the odds of prejudice, ignorance, presuppositions and the loss of the kings and queens of the lighter stage. For musical comedies, like *Sunny*, *That's a Good Girl*, and *Mr Cinders*, when they were first produced, had the debonair genius of Jack Buchanan, and the vulnerable cuddlesomeness of Bobby Howes; and the dainty provocativeness of Binnie Hale to give them life and substance. Hugh Walpole, after seeing *Mr Cinders* in 1929, said that Howes was one of the greatest actors in the kingdom. Musicals now have no comparable stays and supports. But anyway, the King's Head has a most agreeable talent, and Derek Smees, who, in a part written merely into the margin of the book, gives us the sex-packed Sir George, Lancaster, some of the breeding and the kindness which was noted long ago in the Anglo-Indian colonel in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*.

A picturesque comedy of character

Stanley Wells

SHAKESPEARE
The Merry Wives of Windsor
BBC 2

Because *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has a skillfully plotted intrigue and contains a higher proportion of prose over verse than any other of Shakespeare's plays, it is often treated as farce. But the prose is supple, colourful, and idiosyncratic, and though some of the characters are recycled from other plays, Shakespeare establishes for them individual identities in their new context. Admittedly this is the least aristocratic of his comedies, but the values that it endorses as it moves into the verse of the final episodes are those of romantic comedy. The manically jealous Ford is cured of his obsession, begs forgiveness of his wronged wife, and joins in the plot to trick Falstaff. Anne Page elopes with her handsome young lover, not with either of the less attractive suitors favoured by her parents; her new husband, unabashed by their claims, preaches a brief but plucky sermon on the miseries of enforced marriage and is forthwith welcomed into the family circle. Falstaff himself is led to see the error of his ways and is invited to the celebratory feast. The play ends, not in

the disintegration of farce but in a comic harmony in which the outsider joins the society whose moral values he has been trying to subvert.

David Jones, directing the play for the BBC Shakespeare series, places more emphasis on the characters than on the society whose moral values he has been trying to subvert. With which some of them are associated: only as Pistol kisses Mistress Quickly in the shadows does the direction invite us to remember the plays of the French wars. Less happily, little is done to establish a social context. Though naturalistic settings may seem to demand some kind of social perspective, in this production scarcely anything happens on the fringes of the action, played against and in a pretty setting of half-timbered buildings. It is all more like an underpopulated travelogue on behalf of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust than an evocation of Tudor Windsor. Elizabethan costumes admirably complement the period setting, but Slender's folly might usefully have been set off by stronger visual reminders of his wealth, inadequately conveyed to a modern audience by the information that he has "three hundred pounds a year".

The text is played with little alteration - omissions of a few obscurities, classical references, and the allusions to the Garter ceremony; minor adjustments to take advantage

of the fact that, for instance, the camera can show Falstaff lolling away from Ford's house in his guise as the old woman of Brentford; and occasional, harmless modernizations - "kidneys" for "reins", "protected" for "delivered". The production style is gently comic rather than uproariously farcical, while admitting mildly amusing comic business involving the problems of negotiating a low beam in Falstaff's attic bedroom along with more robust horseplay in the climactic scenes of Ford and the buckbasket. David Jones seeks comedy of character rather than of action, sometimes at a sacrifice of complexity. The final scene gives us the mischievous geniality of the tricksters but fails to counterpoint it with a sense that Falstaff may truly take them to be emanations of the supernatural.

The mode places heavy responsibilities upon the actors, and the strong cast includes performers who have already matured their interpretations in other productions of the Falstaff plays. Gordon Gostelow is richly eccentric as Randolph, Falstaff's "withered servingman", stoical in the face of dismissal, successfully weathering his transmutation into a tapster. Ben Kingsley's mastery of comic timing is a pleasure to watch as he backs to the surface than Mr Griffiths gives us here. This is a weakness of the production; but with Verdi's *Falstaff* and with pippins and cheese to come, it made an enjoyable item in the BBC's bill of Christmas fare.

A life on the move

Peter Kemp

The World of James Joyce and Joyce in June
BBC2

BBC2, in Christmas week, incorporated quite a lot of Joyce into its seasonal rejoinders. The airing of his centenary year was marked by two commendable and complementary programmes.

The World of James Joyce, a long, packed documentary which was made for Radio Telefís Éireann, offered an informative collage of film and photographs and reminiscence. Pleasurably and painstakingly, it re-assembled Joyce's two worlds: the external one that helped to shape his imagination, and the internal one that his imagination shaped. Extracts from his fiction were intelligently paralleled with visual reminders of the life that he transmuted into art: Edwardian Dublin with its cobbles, trams, and hoardings advertising Reckitt's Blue or Cybra-Gate-Polish; Clongowes College, where crucifixes hung above the blackboards; and brette's mentors massed round the young Joyce; Dublin, it was emphasized, gave Joyce his enduring subject matter; Technicism, many of his fictional techniques. Another factor underlined was Joyce's restlessness. He occupied Richard Ellmann calculated, over 200 addresses. Joyce's peripatetic life, keeping on the move, was traced back to his father's fecklessness and suggested as partly responsible for the later disorientation of his own children. It might also have opened up a useful way into discussion on his fiction. Though stigmatizing Dublin as stagnant and paralysed, Joyce sends his imagination roaming vigorously around it; his most extensive portrait of one of its citizens is Bloom, another ceaseless Rambler. A dislike of staying put even gets into the way his books are written: *A Portrait of the Artist* moves from one style to another; *Ulysses* shifts its stylistic premises with each episode; *Finnegans Wake* jumps in and out of different languages.

Rather holding back from literary investigation, the programme was copious and shrewdly selective in its coverage of Joyce's life. His early struggles - to get out of Ireland, then to get into print - were shrewdly charted. And it was good to see handsome credit going to Harriet Weaver, the lady-like librarian, who gave Joyce,

it was reckoned, the equivalent of a quarter of a million pounds. Following the author from bright-eyed boy in a sailor suit to near-blind old man in a boater, the programme brought out the fruitful paradoxes in his personality - the superstitious atheism and gregarious loneliness, the cosmopolitan domesticity, and nostalgic castigation of the city that he left yet never left off thinking of. Among such was illuminating, there were reminders of his brave tenacity - writing his downy coat to the light and aid his failing eyes - and some lively curiosities, such as a gamely rendered version of *Love's Old Sweet Song* by a friend who used to accompany Joyce in singing it.

This song - the pretext for Molly and Boylan's assignation in *Ulysses* - was also heard in *Joyce in June*, a musical play by Stewart Parker which juggled entertainingly with Joycean motifs and characters. The opening scenes, aiming to establish the grimy actuality of the young Joyce's life, were not entirely successful. As Joyce, Kilian McKenna lurches drunkenly down murky backstreets or lounged opinionatedly against the Guinness-black woodwork of a Dublin pub, holding forth to student cronies. But compared with the down-at-heel outsider, glowering from the photographs, the earlier programme reproduced, his looked too comfortable, dapper and, decorated. The play seemed on more solid ground in the fantastic that comprised its second half. A kind of ode to *Ulysses*, this portrayed a party of artists from the book on a concert tour in the week following June 16, 1904. Plundering *Ulysses* for apt material, Parker had obviously lingered with special relish over the "Sirens" episode (Bryon played *sonnez la cloche* while Molly's garter, watered her luxuriously imbibe survey also gin). Though faithful to the novel's tenor, the play was mainly interested in its musical performers. Seizing the opportunity of re-staging an Edwardian musical *soirée*, it did splendidly. Ladies under hats like tilted plates of unluckily poultry gave voice amid the potted palms. Gentlemen sang with one arm clapped, Napoleon-like, across the chests from which their notes reverberated. A plucking into prominence of musical strains that run - ironically, symbolically, evocatively - through the author's work, *Joyce in June* proved an unusual and neat supplement to the predominantly pictorial documentary given in *The World of James Joyce*.

Something to write about

George Theiner

Voces: Art, Repression and Freedom
Channel 4

We have heard it said often enough, indeed some of us have said it ourselves: why is it (if, in fact, it is the case) that the best literature these days seems to be produced by writers living under repressive dictatorships of one sort or another - in the Soviet Union, countries of what is known under the collective if inaccurate term Eastern Europe, in Latin America, South Africa, and so on? In the last programme of the *Voces* series to be chaired by Al Alvarez, this proposition was discussed by Mary McCarthy, the exiled Russian poet Joseph Brodsky, and George Steiner.

Steiner, who quickly found himself in a minority of one, argued that the pursuit of excellence in literature had been well and truly abandoned in the "free world", the sole exception perhaps being Ireland, which also experienced some censorship and much violence. In our own, relatively free, societies George Steiner complained of trivialization, vulgarization, the adoption of the values of the (super) market-place. As examples he gave the interruption, "regular, very brief intervals" of *Bolshoi*, when "screened on American television, by advertisements for panty-boss and detergents; and the appearance of a leading English philosopher 'on the elegant roof of his college' in an advertisement for men's clothing in a Sunday colour magazine.

Steiner's two distinguished colleagues disagreed vigorously and, as tends to happen when intelligent, persuasive speakers engage in debate, one was tempted to agree with each speaker in turn, on both sides of the argument. On reflection, however, I have to cast my vote against Steiner (and, let it be said, against my own strongly held view in the past) while not denying that repression and persecution can "concentrate the mind" and provide a writer with more meaningful subject-matter than is on offer in more tolerant societies.

In 1972, writing in *Index on Censorship*, which he had just helped to start, Stephen Spender said that "the material by writers which is censored in Eastern Europe, Greece, South Africa

and other countries is among the most exciting that is being written today". This view would appear to be borne out by Alvarez, who named Zbigniew Herbert as the best contemporary poet in the world, with Miroslav Holub and Vasko Popa not far behind in the quality stakes - and it cannot be just coincidence that the same Polish, Czech and Yugoslav poets appeared on a similar list given a few years ago by Ted Hughes.

Mary McCarthy herself admitted that she had envied Solzhenitsyn, since he was still in the Soviet Union, when "people listened to him" whereas the excess of noise in our part of the world made it difficult for the writer's voice to be heard. And I remember another prominent American author, on his return from a visit to Prague, expressing much the same sentiments about the banned and persecuted writers in Czechoslovakia who, he felt, at least had "something worth writing about".

To support his case, Steiner quoted the Argentinian writer Borges, who once said that "censorship is the mother of the metaphor", and he named a whole galaxy of great Russian poets, from Akhmatova and Mandelstam to Joseph Brodsky himself. Brodsky countered by pointing out that Akhmatova, Mandelstam and Pasternak had already established their reputations by the time the real repression started in the 1920s and that, in any case, "the greatest achievements of this century" had come from the West in the work of such writers as Proust and Beckett; while, on the other hand, far more "quite unreadable" trash was being produced in the Soviet bloc than ever here.

Brodsky two, Steiner one, I think must be the final score - but this kind of debate can hardly be expected to produce any cut-and-dried answers; at best, it will provoke, stimulate, provide food for thought. The much-maligned Channel 4 is to be congratulated for giving air time to such an important and fascinating subject - though perhaps fascinating only to a small, if dedicated, band of viewers interested in literature, or freedom, or both.

What's this Channel 4 got? An *Alternative Report*, edited by Simon Blanchard and David Morley (180pp. Comedica, 9 Poland St. London W1: £9.50, paperback £3.50, 0 906890 29 2) examines the provenance and prospects of the new channel.

New Oxford Books: Social Science & Law

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Amartya Sen

'A book that embodies the best traditions of social science. It is empirical and rational, yet neither virtue is pushed to the point where human beings are forgotten.' *Economist*. This title is new in paperback and is a fully corrected version of the hardback which was published in 1981. Paperback £4.95 20 January

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A Study and Translation of Palnādu Virula Katha, a Telugu Oral Tradition from Andhra Pradesh, India.
Gene H. Roghair

In this book Gene Roghair provides a translation of one of the most important Telugu oral epics. The origins of the tradition on which it is based are in turbulent twelfth century South India, but the epic has evolved over the centuries into an elaborate interpretation of the world as viewed from Palnādu and more specifically from Kārempudi, the village where the great battle of the epic is said to have taken place. £22.50

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UNICEF

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The Judge, Discretion, and the Criminal Trial

Rosemary Pattenden

This book is concerned with the discretion exercised by a judge in the course of a criminal trial before a jury. The aim is twofold: first, to consider the discretion which may be exercised; second, to provide a theoretical framework within which to assess the discretion. £20

Promises, Morals, and Law

P. S. Atiyah

'The book... makes the reader rethink his attitude toward the possible cross-fertilization of legal study and philosophy. Joseph Raz in *Harvard Law Review*. This is a paperback reprint of the cloth edition published in 1981. Paperback £8.95 20 January

Oxford University Press

to the editor

'The Logic of Natural Language'

Sir, - There are philosophers who believe that Gottlob Frege is to logic what Isaac Newton is to physics. In my book, *The Logic of Natural Language*, reviewed in the TLS of November 26 by Peter Geach, this popular judgment is disputed. Frege is no Newton if only because Aristotle's logic is not as unscientific as his physics. In *The Logic of Natural Language* I showed how, with the right notation, traditional formal logic (TFL) could be extended as a system comparable in inference power to standard systems of modern predicate logic (MPL).

A glance at the jacket of *The Logic of Natural Language* informs one that Peter Geach is treated therein as the paradigm example of a "Fregean". He is indeed subjected to adverse criticism throughout the book. In his review Geach reacts with heat, comparing me unfavourably to his benighted self of some fifty years ago. Towards the end he makes three moves he takes to be crushing and announces "fool's mate". The reader learns very little about the book, which is all right since he learns it is not worth bothering with anyway.

A reviewer less preoccupied or more conscientious would have reported that the system of TFL developed in *The Logic of Natural Language* appears to be capable of handling inferences that are commonly thought to be beyond the capacity of a traditional term logic, that it is superior to MPL in providing a simple and direct way of transcribing sentences of natural language in a form that exhibits their logical syntax and that renders them immediately ready for logical reckoning. By contrast, in using MPL the student must learn to "translate" English sentences into the artificial language of MPL (eg. rendering "some boy envies every owner of a dog" as "there is a boy, x, such that for any person, y, if there is a dog, z, such that y owns z then x envies y") before he turns to proofs. The reader of Geach's review is not told that the proof and decision procedures of TFL are themselves very much simpler, much shorter and more perspicuous than the corresponding procedures of MPL. Nor does he learn it is a central thesis of my book that natural language has a logical syntax. (Frege denied this.) He is not even informed that *The Logic of Natural Language* provides for the first time a mechanical method for translating English sentences into the language of MPL. Geach as a champion of MPL might have hailed this development were he not so determined to avoid advertising anything about the book that might sound like a contribution. Geach's reputation as a reliable scourge of the "bad old logic" of terms (his folksy phrase for the kind of logic that prevailed before the Fregean Revolution) rests insecurely on his well-known critique of the traditional doctrine of distribution of terms (which the book puts on a scientific footing). On this topic one certainly expects to hear from Geach but he refuses to be drawn.

I have not the space to repeat the many other gaps in Geach's review so I shall address myself to the specific points that he did see fit to raise. In the first half he reflects on my scholarship and historical perspective. I deal with these criticisms briefly:

a) The doctrine that singular propositions are implicitly quantified was attributed by me to Leibniz, not to Aristotle. It is good to find that Geach is not misled.

b) There is no evidence that Leibniz ever thought of identity as a relation or that he construed identity statements as dyadic. There is the evidence I cited to the contrary. If Geach has his Leibniz texts, he should reveal them.

c) I neither said nor implied that

Frege used a phrase that translates as "atomic sentence".

Having attended to my scholarly credentials Geach "turns to Sommer's constructive logical theory". The turning consists of three animal versions, two of which Geach considers devastating:

1. Geach correctly notes that TFL accounts for the validity of "every A is R to every B hence every B is R to every A" by appealing to a primitive semantic law of converse transformation. The suggestion is that MPL has no need of such a principle. But that's wrong; MPL needs it too, to account for such inferences as "Sal struck Al so Al was struck by Sal".

2. Geach is committed to the popular but false belief that TFL is an infirm logic being especially incapable of handling relational arguments. So he confidently offers one sample of what TFL cannot do. Here Geach's view that my book is not worth reading trips him up: the rule that applies directly to validate Geach's example is given on p 184 (R.11).

3. Geach's mating attack concerns pronominalizations of form "An A is a B and it is a C" which TFL treats as a conjunction of two sentences, semantically related but syntactically independent, but which MPL treats as a single quantified sentence. (Pronouns in MPL are bound variables that must occur within the same sentence as the antecedent quantifier that binds them.) According to Geach the intersentential interpretation is a "disaster" since in general "p&q" entails "if p then q" and in this instance "an A is a B and it is a C" will entail "if an A is a B then it is a C" which is equivalent to "every A that is a B is a C", a reduction consequence. At this juncture Geach triumphantly announces "fool's mate" and says unkind things. But once again Geach prefers pouncing to looking at what is explicitly said about the very point under consideration. The relevant discussion is on pp 77-81 where, wouldn't you know, I am criticizing Geach for having applied his "p&q" argument to pronominal conjunctions. The point made there is familiar and not safely ignored: logical schemata must be applied with due attention to the unity of recurrent material elements. For example, "if a then p" is a tautological form but not even "I think, therefore I think" is a valid inference unless it is assumed that "I" denotes the same person twice. Geach deploys the p's and q's of sentential logic uncritically when he assumes that "an A is a B and it is a C" hence if an(y) A is a B then it is a C, is an instance of the schema "p&q, hence if p then q". Pronouns are semantically bound to their antecedents; in dealing with them one must be aware that the univocal condition falls whenever the antecedent terms have opposite distribution values. In "an A is a B and ..." the antecedent term "A" is undistributed. In "if an A is a B then ..." it is distributed. Pronouns having back reference to terms of different distribution values do not have the same denotation, however similar they may look on paper. (The distribution value of a term is determined mechanically in TFL by its positive or negative occurrence in the sentence.) Geach might also have had qualms about taking "an A is a B" univocally as a recurrent "p". In "if an A is a B" "an" is replaceable by "any"; the natural sign that the term following is distributed is "an" and "any" is not replaceable by "any". (*The Logic of Natural Language*, pp 344ff.) The discussion on the differences between pronominal and those that instantiate "fixed parameters" and those that instantiate variably (p 144f) should also have inhibited Geach.

Incidentally, the virtue of intersentential pronominalization is (a) that it is natural and (b) that it allows for pronominalization across inference lines (as in "A: a man drank the glass. B: so he will die") which MPL has not the expressive means to represent.

On p 79 I noted that "it looks as if Geach is not minding his p's and q's". That can happen to the best of us. What is uncommon is the extent to which Geach polemically relies on selective inattention to text that challenges his Bourbon convictions or is critical of himself. TFL is a healthy alternative to MPL, which is not to say one must choose between them. TFL was superseded by MPL because it was believed to be superior in inference and expressive power. It is as important as ever to Geach that he defend the learned public from the bad old Aristotelian term logic. Well and good. But he had better start by taking TFL seriously, which means re-examining his assumptions that TFL cannot possibly do relations etc. A good place to begin is my book, which I invite him to read.

Geach did note a mistake that distresses me: the entry containing all of the references to Strawson has been unaccountably omitted from the index.

FRED SOMMERS.

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Professing Literature

Sir, - I was surprised to see that Stanley Fish devoted a substantial portion of his article on "Professional anti-professionalism" (December 10) to an attack on my book, *New Readings vs. Old Plays*, since I was not aware that it had taken a position on this subject. In its final chapter, in a brief survey of some of the general causes of the current proliferation of new readings of Renaissance drama (which was quite separate from my main argument), I included the pressure on university teachers to publish. From this statement of what seemed an obvious fact, Fish constructed a critical principle for me - "One imagines that Levin would reply ... by insisting that ... there are new readings that are legitimate because they spring from an honest attempt to come to terms with the experience of the text, and then there are new readings that come into the world only because someone has seized a professional opportunity" - and then quoted another passage in the chapter which contradicts this supposed principle and so convicts me of "incoherence". But my principle and my incoherence are both products of Fish's imagination. I never suggested, anywhere in the book, that readings can or should be differentiated (much less judged) in terms of their authors' personal

motivation. I never suggested it because I do not believe it. Nor do I believe that the motives of the critics I argued against there are any more careerist or any less "honest" than my own. I do not even think that Fish's are.

I am more concerned, however, with the way Fish treats, or avoids treating, my proposal that any critic presenting a new reading of a play should be required to "confront the 'old' reading of the play, fairly and squarely, and show us that it is less probable than his own". He disposes of it summarily by asserting that "this is nothing more or less than a formula for producing new ... readings" and "is what everyone already does", which is supposed to demonstrate my "inability to think of a cure that is not simply another form of the disease, that is, more of the same". But my contention, of course, was just the opposite - namely, that this requirement would abort a great many new readings before they reached print, because it was precisely what their authors did not and could not do. That in fact was an important part of my main argument. It seems clear, then, that Fish and I do not agree on what it means to show that one reading of a text is less probable than another, which has nothing to do with the reasons (careerist or otherwise) why those readings were written. One would therefore have expected him to deal with, or at least acknowledge, this crucial disagreement - that is, if he really wanted to confront my book fairly and squarely.

'The Cosmic Serpent'

Sir, - Perhaps you will permit us a comment on John North's generally fair review of our book *The Cosmic Serpent* (December 24), for he appears to be seriously misreading our approach to historical analysis. Thus, he omits to mention the highly significant modern discovery (in 1978) of Hephaisstos, the discovery that there was a huge disintegrating comet in Earth-crossing orbit dominating the sky in the second and third millennia BC; and the scientific fact is in principle independent of any other historical evidence. It is therefore necessary to re-examine all the early astronomical writings pertaining to this period because they have been interpreted heretofore without the benefit of this knowledge.

We had of course hoped our exploratory discussion would be seen as merely indicative of the possibilities and not such as to "spoil the going for the more committed" as North unfortunately suggests. It is our impression, for example, that the old question has to be raised again whether the names of ancient deities were transferred from comets to planets in the early classical era, and it is in this context, queried by North, that the Babylonian astrologues are of interest. Thus, they appear, at the moment, to have the names of moving planets associated with particular locations in the celestial sphere, a fact that would be the more readily comprehended if the association were in truth with regular meteor streams and their progenitor gods.

S. V. M. CLUBE.
W. M. NAPIER.
Royal Observatory, Blackford Hill, Edinburgh.

Among this week's contributors

GEORGEY BRET'S *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870* was published last year.

EDWARD BLISHEN'S most recent book, *Lizzie Pye*, was published in 1982.

J. S. BRATTON is the author of *The Victorian Popular Ballad*, 1975.

ANTHONY BRETT-JAMES is the editor of *Europe against Napoleon - The Leipzig Campaign, 1813 from eyewitness accounts*, 1970.

J. S. CONWAY'S *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-45* was published in 1968.

GRÉGOIRE DESJARDINS is a visiting lecturer in Philosophy and Literature at the University of Warwick.

D. J. ENGLISH'S *Collected Poems* were published in 1981.

ERNEST GEBLNER'S books include *Spectacles and Predicaments - Essays in Social Theory and Midland Society*, 1981.

JEAN GOTTMANN is Professor of Geography at the University of Oxford.

ROY HARRIS'S most recent book, *The Language Myth*, was published in 1981.

PAUL HENLEY is the author of *The Panare*, 1982.

MATTHEW HODGART'S books include *James Joyce: A Student's Guide*, 1978.

JENNIFER HORNBY'S *Actions* was published in 1980.

GEORGEY HUNTER is Professor of Philosophy at the University College of North Wales, Bangor.

GERARD IRVINS is the Vicar of St Matthew's Westminster and a Prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral.

JULIE MITCHELL'S books include *Woman's Estate*, 1971, and *Psychic Analysis and Feminism*, 1974.

DAVID PARKER is Senior Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Leeds.

MENNA PRESTWICH is a Fellow of St Hilda's College, Oxford.

PETER RADGROVE'S radio play *Florentine and the Tuscan* Millions was last year's BBC entry for the Italia Prize.

GAMMAL SALADO is Professor of English at the University of Exeter.

VIVIAN SALMON'S books include *The Study of Language in 17th Century England*, 1979.

VERNON SCANNELL'S autobiography, *The Tiger and the Rose*, was published in 1971.

FRED SCHWARZBACH teaches in the Department of English at Washington University, St Louis.

GEORGE THIBNER is the editor of *Index on Censorship*.

ANTHONY THWATT is the editor of *Larkin at Sixty*, 1982.

FRANK TUOHY'S collection of stories, *Live Bait*, was published in 1978.

IGOR VINOGRADOFF co-edited the correspondence of the Emperor Alexander III and Nicholas II for the *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 1962, and 1964.

DENNIS WALDER is a lecturer in Literature at the Open University and author of *Dickens and Religion*, 1981.

STANLEY WELLS is the compiler of *Nineteenth-Century Shakespeare Bibliography*, 1977.

Means of communication

Roy Harris

JOHN J. GUMPERZ

Discourse Strategies

225pp. Cambridge University Press. £17.50 (paperback, £5.95). 0 521 24691 1

The discourse strategies which are the subject of this book by John Gumperz, Professor of Anthropology at Berkeley, are communicational techniques which we rely on in the management of conversation and other verbal exchanges. Their subtle variations from one type of situation and subculture to another add greatly to the linguistic complexities of making sure other people understand what we mean by what we say. Ignorance of these subtleties may have consequences which are sometimes serious, sometimes comic, and sometimes just embarrassing. An example of the first type would be the case which Gumperz discusses in some detail of the black orator who used the expression *we will kill Richard Nixon* in a political speech and was as a result arrested on a charge of threatening the life of the President of the USA. An example of the third type would be the awkwardness felt by the American visitor admiring a painting hanging in the living-room of a British housewife, who told him the name of the painter in response to his dutiful "Who's the artist?" (said with appropriate intonation pattern, and stress on the first syllable of the noun). The mistress of the house evidently took this as a request for information about the identity of the painter, thus failing to recognize the remark as fitting into a common American formula for paying personal compliments to one's host or hostess. (The expected reply would have been something like "Oh, it's just a hobby of mine".)

Gumperz's own speciality in this field is interethnic communication. Many readers of this review may remember the excellent BBC Series "Multi-racial Britain", which included

a film called *Crosstalk* based on the work of Gumperz and his colleagues. *Crosstalk* dealt with the everyday breakdowns which occur when a reputedly international language called "English" is expected to do duty as a means of communication between people of quite different ethnic provenance. It examined practical cases of various kinds, ranging from job interviews to parent-teacher discussions, to illustrate how easily the assumption that members of a multicultural society "understand one another" simply in virtue of speaking a "common language" can be not merely false but dangerous. *Discourse Strategies* goes back over some of this ground, as well as dealing with other sociolinguistic topics on which Gumperz has carried out previous research, including code-switching in bilingual communities.

Whereas *Crosstalk* was crisp, lively and accessible, the book which Gumperz has now written for the Cambridge University Press unfortunately is not. Ironically, the trouble lies in the very area of Gumperz's main concern: communication. It is said that a scholar who has so much of importance to say on this subject should choose to say it in a way which makes his message virtually incomprehensible to the great majority of his potential audience. The barrier in this case is the dreadful academic jargon which seems to be the currently fashionable professional style for much American and American-influenced sociology. How many of the viewers who immediately grasped the point of *Crosstalk* will be able to make head or tail of statements like the following?

(i) Detailed observation of verbal strategies revealed that an individual's choice of speech style has symbolic value and interpretive consequences that cannot be explained simply by correlating the incidence of linguistic variants with independently determined social and contextual categories.

or

(ii) Assumptions about the relationships of statistically analysed

sociolinguistic indices to individual behaviour are not testable within the framework of group oriented sociolinguistic theory.

Does the latter just mean that you can't predict what any particular person will say simply from generalizations about how persons of that social status normally talk? (Well, well! What a revelation!) As for (i), anyone might be forgiven for mistaking that for the point Shaw made much more lucidly in his Preface to *Pygmalion*: "Ambitious flower-girls... must not imagine that they can pass themselves off as fine ladies by untutored imitation."

It will doubtless be argued in defence of Gumperz's language that this is not a book addressed to the general public, but to fellow specialists. To which one might reply that the vindication is itself a dismal reflection on the verbal strategies favoured by the corporate body of Gumperz's fellow specialists. But there is also a more basic objection, which has to do with the fact that the opaque terminology of much current sociolinguistic writing is actually a cover-up for very shaky theoretical foundations.

Gumperz professes himself sceptical about some of the theoretical assumptions underlying the works of both linguists and sociologists. But his own treatment of theoretical issues hardly inspires confidence, on at least three counts.

The first concerns his vague and sometimes puzzling allusions to positions allegedly held by others. For example, he criticizes mainstream linguistics, from Saussure down to Chomsky, for espousing the theoretical assumption that in order to analyse a language we have to treat it as an internally consistent calculus which, ideally, would and could be used only for communication within a homogeneous monoglot community. So far so good. But then for good measure he attributes to these benighted theorists tenets which they never held. Saussure, he says, believed in a distinction between "core features" and "marginal features" of

languages. But it is hard to see where this distinction is in fact drawn in the *Cours de linguistique générale* or what role it plays in Saussurean linguistics. When, to cap it, Gumperz tells his readers that Saussurean theory treated choice among lexical, phonetic and syntactic options as belonging among the linguistically "marginal" features, one begins to wonder whether Gumperz has actually ever read Saussure at all.

Secondly, Gumperz himself seems to take a theoretical stance which simply defines communication as a form of interaction. "Only when a move has elicited a response", he states, "can we say communication is taking place." But why? And what, on this view, is a response? It appears to involve the hearer in something more than merely understanding what was said; he has to respond by saying something in turn, or at the very least by signalling his comprehension in some non-verbal way. The difficulty with this is obvious. If communication is thus defined for theoretical purposes, it cuts out whole areas of linguistic behaviour normally considered communicative; and it does so just as ruthlessly as a strict structuralist interpretation of language eliminates much of what goes on in speech as non-linguistic. Nor do the theoretical problems end there. It is perfectly possible to envisage situations in which two interlocutors "respond" to each other for all they are worth, but neither manages to understand the other right. Is this communication? Or is it failure to communicate? (Gumperz occasionally uses the term *miscommunication*, but refrains from explaining what it means.) The plain fact is that the notion of "response" is too intrinsically problematic to hang a whole theory of communication upon it. Unless there are reasonably clear criteria for deciding what counts as a response to what, then anything (including not responding) might conceivably be a response to anything else, and the notion thus collapses from its own vocation. Gumperz has put the theoretical boot on the wrong foot. To

validate "response" as a theoretical concept, we first need to establish what communication is.

Thirdly, the view Gumperz takes of the explanatory problem facing sociolinguistics falls into precisely the same error as that committed by the orthodox linguistic theorists he criticizes. He accepts that the ability to produce - and presumably comprehend - things called "grammatical sentences" is what is common to all speakers of a language. The explanatory task starts there. Thus, to cite one of his own examples, we find cases like this. One office employee says to another "Are you gonna be here for ten minutes?" and gets the immediate reply "Go ahead and take your break". Now for Gumperz the great problem is that the sentence-meaning of the reply does not tie up with the sentence-meaning of the question. So Gumperz, in common with others, supposes it is theoretically essential to invoke a whole complicated apparatus of tacit inferences, conventions, shared knowledge, etc. In order to explain how the exchange could possibly make sense. And furthermore an "internalized" version of this same apparatus is then attributed to the interlocutors themselves. Gumperz does not see that the nigger in this explanatory woodpile is the initial premiss.

If you have no qualms about starting from the belief that every English "grammatical sentence" has a fixed, contextless, sentence-meaning, and then assuming that whatever this meaning is it must somehow be known to all fluent speakers of English, and then in addition postulating that a hearer's task is invariably how to get from the immediate recognition of this sentence-meaning to identifying some quite different meaning which the speaker who uttered the sentence actually had in mind, then indeed you have a problem on your hands. Such a problem, indeed, that it is difficult to see how to avoid the conclusion that a prerequisite for really successful communication is telepathy.

A nomenclature for nature

Vivian Salmon

M. M. SLAUGHTER

Universal Languages and Scientific Taxonomy in the Seventeenth Century

277pp. Cambridge University Press. £25. 0 521 24477 3

In introducing this study, M. M. Slaughter makes a highly pertinent comment: "There remains the reason why". She is questioning the lifelong interest of such a distinguished seventeenth-century scholar as John Wilkins in a subject which may seem to be a mere curiosity, as well as the attraction for so many modern scholars of the (apparently) naively enthusiastic inventors of universal languages. This study succeeds in explaining why the seventeenth-century "fools" such projects so compelling; they were an attempt to bring order into the chaotic state of knowledge arising from the "information explosion" of the Renaissance, and at the same time appeared to offer a precise and unambiguous nomenclature, not easily obtainable in the vernaculars, for the proliferation of facts to which scientists now needed to refer.

For the modern scholar, the attraction of the language inventors and their creations lies in the enormous range of interests involved in their study; it is immensely rewarding to discover how various disciplines, each with a special contribution to make, are brought together by seventeenth-century grammarians, logicians, phoneticians, mathematicians and statisticians, and made use of for the single purpose of creating a universal, philosophical language. Most readers, even if they are not specialists in the field, will discover the wide-ranging bibliography of this volume at least a few entries with which they will be

familiar; a brief glance will show citations of authorities as diverse as Christopher Hill, Leonard Bloomfield, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jack Goody, Lawrence Stone and Michel Foucault, as well, of course, as all the expected sources of information on seventeenth-century science, philosophy and linguistics. In the study of the seventeenth-century universal language movement the two cultures do indeed meet.

Dr Slaughter points out that interest in the movement is, if anything, increasing, and her claim is no doubt based on the publication in recent years of a number of articles devoted to individual aspects of the subject, such as one of the newly-discovered papers of George Dalgarno, author of *Artis Sigorum* (1661) and another on John Wilkins's debt to medieval speculative grammar. The last comprehensive treatment of the topic, however, appeared seven years ago - James Knowlson's *Universal Languages: Schemes in England and France 1600-1800* (1975), and the interval since its publication has seen the development and expansion of certain relatively new areas of enquiry which have proved particularly fruitful for students of the universal language movement. Dr Slaughter has been able to draw on these sources, making especially fruitful use of the writings of Foucault, and of Professor Stone and others who have investigated the development of printing and literacy and their effects on society. Of her debt to Foucault, Dr Slaughter remarks: "Foucault's ideas on taxonomy as a representative system or language are pervasive [ie, in her book], certainly more than the sub-total of the individual footnotes"; while of the importance of recent studies on the development of literacy she writes: "There is evidence to indicate that decontextualization and taxonomic analysis developed with the onset of writing and/or printed language and with increasing literacy, where words become physical, visible

objects." In citing Foucault, and recent work on the development of literacy, Dr Slaughter is not the first to acknowledge their relevance to the history of linguistic thought; they have already been utilized in Murray Cohen's admirable *Sensible Words: Linguistic Practice in England 1640-1783* (1977). She is the first, however, to recognize to the full their importance in the appreciation of universal language schemes, a topic which is only one among many handled by Dr Cohen.

With so much now in print on the seventeenth-century language projects, Dr Slaughter has been able to concentrate on a single aspect without having constantly to explain it by reference to the general context. She has not therefore felt obliged to give any detailed consideration to the known motivations of some of the language inventors, such as the desirability of an international means of communication for merchants and other travellers, but has argued (contrary to the accepted view) that the motives of the language planners were scientific rather than linguistic - they were concerned "more with nature than with language". At first, their scientific method was dominated by an Aristotelian world view in which classification plays a vital part, and Dr Slaughter regards this "essentialist" taxonomy as so important in the planning of most of the seventeenth-century universal languages that she devotes almost a third of the text to explaining and illustrating it, with special reference to the development of botanical studies in the period.

Aristotelian taxonomy inspired John Wilkins in what proved to be the most distinguished of the seventeenth-century language projects, the *Essay towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language* (1668), and even while he was engaged on this work, a different approach to the study of nature was being proposed. As Dr Slaughter explains, while Aristotelian

taxonomy depended on the discovery of qualitative distinctions, quantitative differences were coming to be accepted as of greater importance by some scholars concerned with universal language, such as Wilkins's colleague Oxford in the 1650s, Seth Ward. Ward argued that objects or concepts should be analysed into "simple notions" or basic properties, to each of which a monosyllabic label would be assigned. "Complex" objects or concepts would be denoted by a concatenation of syllables, each labelling a "simple notion" inherent in the concept. This offered a quite different mode of analysis to a taxonomy, and Dr Slaughter sees it as comparable to the "quantitative" analysis of reality which, particularly after the publication of Newton's *Principia*, was generally adopted by scientists who realized the necessity of measuring and predicting, rather than simply describing.

Dr Slaughter's book is divided into three sections. The first and the third describe the "rise" and the "fall" of what she calls, following Foucault, the "taxonomic episteme". The second section deals with the development of the universal language movement, and sets out the arguments for its being directed primarily towards the classification and ordering of the natural world, rather than a linguistic enterprise. Sections One and Three of the book are learned and stimulating and will be found particularly valuable by those whose expertise lies in the field of linguistics rather than in the history of science or philosophy. But in the second section Dr Slaughter repeats a good deal of material which is already in print, and in doing so does not always make absolutely clear the principles on which she bases her use of quotation, though she provides extensive and detailed footnotes, and makes generous overall acknowledgements, on the first page of the preface, to current scholarship in the field. It should also be noted that

the complete accuracy of her quotations cannot always be guaranteed. Nevertheless, the book as a whole is to be warmly recommended. It studies in detail an aspect of the universal language movement which historians of linguistic ideas have tended to treat somewhat cursorily, argues persuasively for the priority of scientific motivation over linguistic, and provides an excellent example of the continuing controversy (much rehearsed among theoretical linguists in the past two decades) between taxonomic empiricists and rationalists.

Most of the essays published in *Berkeley: Critical and Interpretive Essays*, edited by Colin M. Turbayne (252pp. University of Minnesota Press, £27.50, paperback £10.95. 0 8166 1065 7) are revised versions of papers delivered at the Berkeley Commemorative Conference held at Newport in 1979 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Berkeley's arrival there in 1729. In his preface Professor Turbayne points to a growing interest in Berkeley's philosophy, and attributes it to the fact that he is "astonishingly contemporary". The book is divided into nine sections, on common sense and relativism, ideas and perception, method, mathematics, primary and secondary qualities, space and time, ether and corporeals, idealism and universals, the "doctrine of signs" and "the language of nature" and mind; and among the papers are "On Being 'Embrangled' by Time" by E. J. Furlong, "Did Berkeley Completely Misunderstand the Basis of the Primary/Secondary Quality Distinction in Locke?" by Margaret D. Wilson, "The Philosopher by Fire" in Berkeley's *Alciphron* by I. C. Tipson, "Is Berkeley's 'Christian Ministry' a Real Character?" by J. W. Dancy, "Hand to Philonous: The Berkeley Platonist Connection" by Colin M. Turbayne. "Truth is the cry of all, but the game of the few."

Echoes from the opera house

Matthew Hodgart

RUTH BAUERLE (Editor)

The James Joyce Songbook
711pp, with musical scores.
New York: Garland. \$100.
0 8240 9345 3

This would make a nice present for the musical members of your family, provided that you are an Irish or American-Irish millionaire. One hundred dollars and a weak pound put it out of reach of all but the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo; and at this stage in the nightmare of history many of the songs will be all-too-Irish for a British palate. I cannot picture any English, Scots or Welsh singers around the piano rendering "The Boys of Wexford" or "God Save Ireland", the latter celebrating the Fenian terrorists. With Anne the convivial appearance of this beautifully printed book, in contrast to some of the grim ballads it contains. As the editor remarks, Joyce used some of these nationalist songs ironically, since he hated violence, whether the "shattered glass and toppled masonry" left by the bombers or the knives of the Phoenix Park murderers. Incidentally Joyce would not have been surprised by recent events; the killings still being commemorated in IRA songs and the hypocrisy of various governments would have proved to him that the Irish were running true to form, as in Shem's parody, "When Irish eyes are welcome were smiling daggers down their backs." But if this collection is not wholly suitable for home entertainment it is indispensable for the proper reading of Joyce's text.

It contains nearly 200 songs, nearly all with facsimiles of the melody and most with the piano accompaniment as well. The first thirty-three are songs which Joyce is known to have sung, with excellent biographical commentaries. Next there is a selection of the songs alluded to in each of the works, in *Dubliners*, *A Portrait*, and the successive chapters of *Ulysses*. Songs 56 to 158 are quoted or mentioned in *Ulysses*, 159 to 197 in *Finnegans Wake*, which is a disproportionate sum, since *Finnegans Wake* contains many more song references. There are short but highly relevant and accurate comments before each song, explaining very clearly its symbolic or narrative function in the work. Ruth Bauerle's scholarship is immaculate, and I have to confess that it puts me to shame, for I have long been dabbling in this subject but have never been able to produce anything as satisfactory as this. I first learned from the Irish novelist L. A. G. Strong (*The Sacred River*, 1947) that song was of primary importance to Joyce's imagination. I tried to improve on Strong's short list of allusions, and printed some of my findings in an article in 1952. I then discovered that an American scholar, Mabel Worthington, was doing the same kind of thing, and we agreed to collaborate without ever having met. Our book was published in 1959: it was, as Mrs Bauerle says in a kind acknowledgement, a pioneer study which some students of Joyce found to be useful. It is now, of course, completely out of date, and has been largely superseded by many commentators, such as Zack Bowen (*Musical Allusions*, 1974), who deals with early work and *Ulysses* but not with *Finnegans Wake*. Weldon Thornton likewise noted many errors and omissions in Hodgart and Worthington, and there have been quite a few others still. Thanks to these scholars, and not least the author of the new *Songbook*, it is safe to conclude that *Ulysses* is now completely understood as far as musical allusions are concerned, though perhaps its musical structure is not yet fully elucidated. That is certainly not true of *Finnegans Wake*, which despite great advances in recent years is still only partially deciphered.

Our early study had many defects, but the most serious was that it was light on opera and the sorry to report that this defect is shared by Mrs Bauerle's *Songbook*. It contains among the songs that Joyce used to sing three arias from *Traviata*, one from *Butterfly*, one from *Traviata* and one from *Orfeo*; there are two operatic references in the Poems; and only two in the whole of the selections relevant to *Ulysses* ("La ci darem la mano" and "M'appari"). In the twenty-eight songs illustrating *Finnegans Wake* there is only "Morir! si pura e bella" from *Aida*. This cannot be right, indeed it is almost ridiculous, considering the vast number of quotations from Italian, German and French opera with which Joyce loaded his punning text, not to speak of hundreds of names of operatic characters and singers. (I do not count his many references to Anglo-Irish quasi-operas and Gilbert and Sullivan.) Joyce was obsessed with the whole classic repertoire, and especially with Mozart, Verdi, Puccini and above all Wagner. The best introduction to his involvement with opera is "From a Banned Writer to a Banned Singer", a tribute to the Irish tenor Sullivan, which can be found, exhaustively annotated, in Ellmann's and Mason's *Critical Writings of James Joyce*. It contains hundreds of operatic puns in a few pages, in *Wake* style but without the distracting recurrent themes of the *Wake*; it is consequently quite easy to read. It shows how totally preoccupied with opera Joyce was during the period of writing the *Wake*, as does the biographical evidence.

The easiest part of the *Wake* to decipher into operatic plain language is the first chapter of Book III, or the "First Watch of Shaun". This begins with *Figaro* (the counting) and goes on to *Nabucco* ("Va pensiero") and to

dozens of tenor arias; the chapter is also remarkable for the great number of tenors' names mentioned, apart from Count Shaun McCormack himself, the chief target of the satire. From this chapter one can go on to harder parts of the *Wake* and gradually discover how basic opera is not only for the book's details but for its themes and structure. The trick is to have a good knowledge of the text and to use any of the standard reference-books, such as Kobbé or, better, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, while listening to selections of arias (never mind about complete operas, except for Wagner). A useful principle is that of first things first, last things last. The river motif from the *Ring*, the cries of the Rhine-maidens, the first words of *Tristan* and the first words spoken by Tristan himself, these are where you would expect to find them, in the first few pages; and I have published the evidence that the great final monologue of the dying heroine contains the last words of several tragic operatic heroines, including those of Gilda, Violetta, Butterfly and Brünnhilde ("Heiloh!"). The very last and unfinished sentence takes one back to the cries of the Rhine-maidens ("A way a . . .").

A major difficulty in the interpretation of the *Wake* is that few Joycean scholars seem to care or know much about opera. An exception was the late James Blish, the Science-Fiction writer, who apparently loved Joyce and opera, but died before he could make a major contribution to the subject. Even my late friend Mabel Worthington, who knew all about Gilbert and Sullivan, folk songs and

much, much more, could never be persuaded to show a great deal of interest in serious songs. Adeline Glasheen's *Census*, though a splendid book in many ways, is certainly very short on identifications of singers or operatic characters. I handed over all my musical knowledge to Roland McHugh, who printed many of my discoveries and those of other investigators in what is now the best book on the *Wake*, his *Annotated* (1980). He did not print all my discoveries, because he was sceptical about some of them, and rightly did not want to include any interpretation of which he was not quite sure.

And here lies a major difficulty. If you take a list of tenors famous enough to get into the *Concise Dictionary*, and start trying to find them in the "Shaun" chapter, you are bound to come to a name about which you will be uncertain, because you don't know as much about tenors as Joyce did. Thus, everyone can spot Caruso, Mario and Lauri-Volpi, but how many can remember the Polish tenor Mieczyslaw, who is certainly in the text along with even less well-known singers? A name that is curiously easy to miss is that of Gigli, although he was almost as famous as Caruso—he was Joyce's *bête noire* and turns up half a dozen times in disguise. But no-one except a fanatic would know what Melba's real name was. Nothing was too slight or out of the way, it would seem, for Joyce to note and eventually use; as for instance the sad story of the once famous soprano Bugge: when she died in poverty, her cadaver was accidentally identified in the morgue by a doctor who had been one of her

fans. This unfortunate lady duly turns up on p58 of the *Wake*, as one can discover from Clive Hart's *Concordance*.

The case is bad enough with the names of singers, operatic characters and titles, and composers, but with songs it is even worse. Many of the arias are so cunningly concealed that one can miss them even after they have become familiar; for example, on p95 "Ah, dearhearted forsailoshe!" to me suggests two well-known arias: "Caro nome" from *Rigoletto* and "Ah fors'è lui" from *La Traviata*, whereas other readers may not feel quite so confident. There are nevertheless a great many arias about which there is a general consensus; a lot of *Don Giovanni*, for example, and the long quotation from "E lucevan le stelle" (*Tosca*). Although the new *Songbook* has given and will continue to give great pleasure, I think that it should have offered at least a dozen more arias, and a few extracts from the score of the *Ring* and *Tristan*. It is hardly possible to read too much Wagner into the *Wake*: it is wonderfully illuminating to listen to the end of *Rheingold* together with the Valhalla passage on p547 ("Heaven, he halldundered; Heydays . . ."). Even Wagner's biography and musical theories are worked into the text at some length. It is possible to think of Wagner as the seminal influence on the *Wake*, the Magus who gave Joyce both a mythology and structural principles. Mrs Bauerle's selection is admirable in every other way, however, and her comments will help readers to understand that the experience of *Finnegans Wake* is itself a musical one.

The debate continues

J. S. Bratton

ROBERT G. LOWERY (Editor)

O'Casey Annual No 1
233pp. Gill and Macmillan. £20.
0 333 31494 8

BROOKS ATKINSON

Sean O'Casey: From Times Past
Edited by Robert G. Lowery.
174pp. Macmillan. £17.50.
0 333 30010 6

Critical industries have their times of recession; of boom, and indeed of over-production; since the century festivities in 1980 the O'Casey trade has been doing quite well, despite the sad absence of many of his plays from our stages. *O'Casey Annual No 1* and *Sean O'Casey: From Times Past*, both edited by Robert G. Lowery, afford an interesting contrast in value to the consumer. *From Times Past* could act as an introduction to O'Casey, and offers something of interest to all concerned with his work. *The Annual* is an example of the critical production-lines at their most humdrum, turning out familiar and respectable arguments without creating anything new.

The *Annual* is a Macmillan venture intended to take its place beside that devoted to Yeats, and others which are promised for the future. It apparently supersedes the *Sean O'Casey Review*, which Robert Lowery has previously edited. It is placed in the mainstream of O'Casey criticism in his introductory note, which claims both that "the first number of the O'Casey Annual is the culmination of three generations of studies on the dramatist" and that "O'Casey studies are only beginning." It gathers essays by established O'Casey scholars, including David Krause and Ronald Ayling. It has a lengthy review section and an annual bibliography, and so becomes a tool for further work. It also gives the impression that some contributors have stretched or recycled material for inclusion. The function of such a volume is to offer a platform for continuing debate and for the study of detail; but it should not repeat controversy or elevate trivia. There is little sense here of a fresh beginning or of a deliberate reassessment of O'Casey. If there is a bias, it is towards the actual, historical and eventually

the adulatory, varied with a little literary criticism. The auto-biographies, for example, are approached "historically" by the editor himself, listing O'Casey's places of residence and suggesting sources for the titles of chapters; stylistically, in terms of the "Tributes" William J. Maroldo finds to Joyce in *I Knock at the Door*; and chatily, in Tom Bugge's "Sean O'Casey's Dublin", a guide to Sean's neighbours for his friends. This is augmented by a set of photographs of blank front doors and wistful memorial plaques. It is to be hoped that the second volume will stress the plays, which are treated here rather briefly, and again historically, and will devote space to practical stage matters. The

Annual falls short in this as in other respects of the century year volume *Sean O'Casey: Roots and Branches*, edited by Christopher Murray, which was zealous as well as erudite, and where the adulation and acrimony which accompany all O'Casey studies fuelled accurate discussion of the stage. *From Times Past*, a collection of Brooks Atkinson's writings on O'Casey, is a different matter. It offers a central insight into O'Casey, combining historical and critical interest. As Robert Lowery says in his introduction, this critic's name was linked with that of the dramatist while O'Casey's plays were being performed, or failing to find producers, on the New York stage.

Atkinson was not only the man on the spot; he was a critic of insight, with great sympathy for the dramatist. The collection begins with a retrospective biography and critical summary, and then assembles Atkinson's *New York Times* reviews, from the 1926 American premiere of *Juno and the Paycock*. From the outset the critic is well-informed and well-disposed. One may trace the growth of his appreciation from a slightly patronizing insistence that New Yorkers should give a hearing to a "hard-muscled workman" for his "rude strength", to discovering that in *Within the Gates* O'Casey has "come to grips with an extremely difficult form of shapes and echoes and rhythms". He struggles with the inadequacies of New York productions, but always welcomes the insights provoked by attempts to stage the plays; the reader gains an intimate sense of the development of O'Casey's art in relation to the movement of the theatre.

Later sections of the book reprint essays on the autobiographies and other writings, and in these the journalist's approach is less helpful; but Atkinson's personal championship of O'Casey in his old age and at his death is enlightening in a different way, giving the reader a sense of the beauty of the man which reflects upon his work from another angle. This is a worthwhile book, offering advances in understanding its subject to readers at every stage in their acquaintance with O'Casey.

The Crane Bag Book of Irish Studies (Oxford: Dublin: The Blackwater Press. £18. 0 904771 13 X. Copies of the book and the magazine obtainable from The Crane Bag, 75 Pembroke, Cottages, Dromybrook, Dublin 4, Ireland), is a collection of the first ten issues (1971-1981) of the magazine *The Crane Bag*, founded and edited by Patrick Hodderman and Richard Kearney, with a preface by Seamus Heaney. The aim of the magazine, which is published twice yearly (£8 p.a.) is "to disseminate modern Irish thinking and culture, while also engaging the critical participation of artists and thinkers from other countries. Each issue deals with specific theme: 'Among the dead', 'In this collection are "Art and Politics", "A Sense of Nation" and "Mythology" and among those to be dealt with in future issues are "Ireland and Latin America" and "Ireland, Socialism and Culture".

Sketches: By the Sea

1
That black running
Headlong on the beach
Throws back the white
Soles of his feet
Lightning strikes
Twice on the sand
Left foot and right,
My pen in hand

2
Hearing the sea
Not seeing it
On the other side
Of the dunes
Is enough for me
This morning
The distance I keep
From the sea I hear
Brings distance near

3
At night, off shore
Sometimes the lights
On the fishing boats
Sink out of sight
This string of lights
Salt-water wet
Makes the fish rise
To tridents and nets

Samuel Menashe

The bisexual idyll

Juliet Mitchell

JANE GALLOP

Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction
164pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 29471 8

Feminism and Psychoanalysis is a discussion of certain Parisian theories of the psychological construction of femininity. Jane Gallop believes that, particularly in their Anglo-Saxon versions, both feminism and psychoanalysis have reached an impasse, and she proposes to rescue them from this by the double project of turning to Paris and, once there, setting up:

what appears to be an opposition between two thinkers or terms, and then (moving) beyond the belligerence of opposition to an exchange between the terms. The most stubborn opposition is the continual constitution of "opposite sexes" which blocks the possibility of a relation between them. Another inevitable opposition in this network is that between psychoanalysis and feminism or, in other words, between psychoanalysis and politics. In all these cases the goal and the method of this book is to alter that relation from *unyielding opposition* into a *contact between their specific differences*—a contact that might yield some real change.

After a shrewd and silly criticism of my book *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, which takes up her first chapter, Gallop puts Anglo-Saxon efforts behind her and moves to Paris. This offers one immense advantage. Whatever one thinks of the theories of Jacques Lacan, it seems to me indisputable that he restored the twin structures of psychosexuality and the unconscious to a central position in psychoanalysis. "Perhaps for those of us who read Freud in English, a French detour is necessary in order to recover the original, scandalous Viennese reading", Gallop writes. Certainly we must recover the scandalous.

The opposition that Gallop sets up in Paris is between the theories of Lacan on femininity and those of a series of women analysts/writers who both support and oppose both Lacan and each other—Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Eugène Léonore-Luciani, Hélène Cixous, Catherine Clément and Michèle Montrelay. She treats these writers' texts as though they were people, reading between the lines of their slips and elisions. The effect is curious—are we watching a confrontation and relationship between the "opposite sexes" or between opposite theories? Both, I think.

What of the theories? Lacan argues that feminine sexuality (and masculinity) is the effect of a division that occurs only with language and symbolization. The infant is born into a world organized through language. But before it can speak, it can perceive itself only as it is perceived. This perception is as a distorted mirror-reflection: the image the baby is given of itself is whole and coherent ("my baby"), while the experience itself is uncoordinated. The image becomes its "ego" as it grows up—an *imaginary*, derived identity, coming from elsewhere and constituting it as a necessarily "divided self". But this division is embraced by another division set up within the symbolic order of language: the division between the sexes.

For the baby, the world is not divided into two incomplete sexes. Everyone is total, whole; nothing is missing. Lacan argues that words are needed only when something is perceived to be missing—you don't call out for something you have already got. Language indicates that humans must not be perceived to be each complete in themselves. The phallus signifies what the mother on her own lacks. It indicates lack—lack in the mother and lack as it emerges in the person of the child who cannot be everything to the mother. At the same time it stands for what makes up that lack. And it marks the division between the sexes. On one side are those who represent lack—women—

and, on the other, those who claim to fill the gap with a spurious completeness—men. It sets up an asymmetry; the lack inherent in being human, that is to say, in being speaking beings, is projected onto women.

Some Lacanian and post-Lacanian women analysts dispute the phallogocentrism (or phallogocentrism) of Lacan's explanations, and Gallop presents their views in a series of dialogues with Lacan and with each other. Despite all their differences, and all the nuances and complexities of their positions, these women writers propose an account of feminine sexuality that establishes it (in practice or potentially) on its own terrain. Femininity is not merely its difference from masculinity, nor is it defined only in a symbolic order dominated by the phallus. The women explore the prelinguistic, the imaginary, the semiotic—the area of the first intonations, of the relationship to the mother's body, for the traces of a notion of femininity that can be understood independently of the division of the sexes in a symbolic order.

Although *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* is mainly a staging of intricate confrontations, a thesis, or what Gallop sees as a move forward to "real change" does emerge. It is twofold. The first project represents her move from the empiricism of Anglo-Saxon culture to Jacques Lacan. The second is the interpenetration of these theories of Lacan with the opposition to them. The argument of the first is the subtitle of the book: "The Daughter's Seduction". It is this; where hysterics think their fathers have seduced them, there let feminists seduce their fathers. In Gallop's use of Lacanian linguistics, where the name only arbitrarily refers

to the thing designated, the law the father claims to speak, the phallus he claims to possess, could move elsewhere. So, argues Gallop: "It is not patriarchal culture, but the reduction of the Law of the Dead Father to the rule of the actual, living male that must be struggled against." In the idiom of the book, if by seduction, we can expose the father as just one prick amongst others (ie not treat him as a father), then we can disabuse him of his claim to phallic power.

I believe the problems with this are legion. Most simply, were we to agree that this is our political task, and were it feasible, would it make any important difference? However arbitrarily they do so, words must designate something and when the name-of-the-father has moved elsewhere, as onto the anthropologists' mother's brother, or onto nightmares of totalitarian "big brothers" or onto dreams of feminist matriarchs, then the problem of authority and hierarchy has not dissolved.

The second part of Gallop's thesis—the interpenetration of opposite theories—is expressed in her conclusion where she writes:

these women writers are talking about an "other bisexuality". Neither the fantasmatic resolution of differences in the imaginary, nor the fleshless, joyless assumption of the fact of one's lack of unity in the symbolic, but an other bisexuality, one that pursues, loves and accepts both the imaginary and the symbolic, both theory and flesh.

But can these opposite theories come to relate this, in some idyll of bisexuality? I think not. The theories are in an antagonistic opposition; they are incompatible, and the similarity of

applied to political and social life, its implications would be extremely alarming.

As the title suggests, the crux of Flaubert's story is seen to be Oedipal, and the words in which Flaubert wonders whether he might in fact want to kill his father—and therefore does not "really" want to avoid doing so—are quoted again and again. (Mother is more of a problem, but there are jellies penetrating bottle-necks and does slaughtered as they suckle, not to speak of an orgy of bird-killings, to take care of her.) William Berg plays with Freudian readings: *le père* slips easily into leper; Julian sacrifices himself to the latter because he killed the former. This gets him as near as dammit back to the womb—naked as on the day he was born ("as Flaubert has it)—which is the bliss which passes all comprehension. Berg is concerned lest the reader find his hypothesis "somewhat disturbing", because it seems "to contradict to a certain degree the commonly accepted religious interpretation of the story as a positive salvation and ascension". So he consoles us by showing how, after all, the "Oedipus complex can be transcended". By "sharing" the narrator's point of view, we approach the Oedipal configuration from a different angle, that of the father, who seems to delight in the demise of the upstart son. All good clean fun really, when it's art.

For George Moskos, "Julian is absent from a great part of his own story, because he is *not born as an individual* until the last page." It is one of the first principles of psychoanalysis that the more something is said not to be there, the more it is there and the more it will show up (and vice versa). Julian's lacking but latent individuality is Julian's parlance to describe Flaubert's notoriously impersonal style. The distinctions between beastliness and beauty, fact and fantasy, body and soul, which that great decadent knew so well how to throw into disarray, are here pushed back into good spiritual order: individuality is taking place. Julian has to go through carnage, cruelty, massacres, parricide, matricide and leprous embrace. How else can he (or anyone?) expect to "recreate consciously the state of uroboric plenitude" and "eliminate the opposition introduced by consciousness"? Well, er . . . Listen:

We are in the world and cannot get out of it, even by detaching ourselves from human ends. Try as we might to reach a higher roost [sic], since our nature is evil, our intent will be to result from the outset, and the result can only be vice-ridden. . . . Consequently God's creatures can only struggle against themselves, and pursue with hatred for themselves a self-destruction. Reality must exist to negate itself through hatred; to make the vain attempt to transcend itself—through that religious call to the infinite—which can be born only in the finite—and to allow itself to be gnawed away by the imaginary, the ambiguous symbol of God.

It may have been unwise to include these pages by Sartre in this book. Certainly, he often pursues similar psychoanalytical lines of thought, but

his vocabulary is only misleading. In Lacan's theory, for instance, language gives meaning to the body's experiences; for the women writers, the body gives meaning to language. Both may be right or wrong, or partly right or partly wrong, but they completely and fundamentally disagree and that is their point. Again, in the women writers, the little girl "recognizes" some femininity in the mother. In Lacan's theory, this pre-symbolic mother is not feminine. She is total, complete; the infant can only recognize its own illusory totality in her.

In her search for a Lacanian corrective view of psychoanalysis and feminism, Gallop has moved away from Anglo-Saxon empiricism into a kind of idealism. Her further effort to move the Parisian oppositions forward into a relationship ends in Utopianism. Utopianism is not without political merit and literary pleasure, but there is always something regressive about it. It has to refer to the *status quo ante* and Gallop's reconciliation is, at its centre, simply the confusion out of which the opposite theories emerged.

Another disquieting feature of *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* is the way in which it treats texts as people; a strange drama of personalities emerges. For one cannot psychoanalyse texts. A symptomatic reading such as Jane Gallop's can provide interesting insights, catch an author in important slips, elisions, condensations that he or she did not intend—but there is no checkpoint. Accuracy can degenerate into triviality. In a clinical situation the free associations of the patient only take on their full meaning within the patient's history. In a textual reading there is, and can be, no history. The author is

not there. The text has a history, but cannot speak in the here and now; its own history is frozen.

Gallop hoped to be the outsider who, in breaking into the family quarrels of the Parisians, would be able to open them up and move them forwards. But nothing really comes out of *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*. The outsider has constituted herself as a spectator. The result is that the perspective has an element of voyeurism which the reader ends up sharing. As spectators we look in on the parent's intellectual antics (here highly sexualized) and wrongly think we can understand the people involved.

But *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* is about important issues. It is lucidly correct (there are one or two minor errors), it is lively, witty, extremely clever. Jane Gallop shocks with the sexual connotations she finds in word-play and etymologies—(concentric: con—cunt; centric—keintrein—to prick; concentric equals cuntprick). But if it is seriously deleterious to tolerate Freud's notions of psychosexuality as the Anglo-Saxons do, so, too, is it important not to confuse the scandal of the object with the pornography of the spectator. Despite its cleverness and comprehension, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* ultimately offers a mildly lascivious discourse on something it has denuded. This French material is notoriously difficult, but here there is something too easy too. I once heard an eminent biologist tell his students "treasure your mistakes". Freud made many mistakes. His subject demanded them. There are no mistakes here; without mistakes how can anything move forward?

The subconscious of a saint

Anthony Thorlby

WILLIAM J. BERG, GEORGE MOSKOS and MICHEL GRIMAUD

Saint/Oedipus: Psychoanalytical Approaches to Flaubert's Art.
305pp. Cornell University Press.
£14.50. 0 8014 1383 4

"Psychoanalytical approaches" have had a hard time as yet entering this country. Perhaps the academic establishment fears addiction among the young, but it may care to note how much is now available and where it comes from: overwhelmingly from the US, with some more sophisticated varieties from Paris. The original plants (*Freud*, *Jung*, et al.) have, of course, long been established here; it is the hybrid which have been cultivated abroad. This book includes an informative, select catalogue of what is on the market, especially with regard to French studies.

The bibliography is the work of Michel Grimaud, as is the new translation of Flaubert's "Legend of Saint Julian, the Hospitaller", which gives a remarkably good impression of the style of the original. Grimaud adds a perceptive commentary on what a translator must pay close attention to—the significance of punctuation, for instance. He is the author also of the central chapter of the book and the Conclusion, which considers the questions raised by psychoanalysis for criticism and aesthetic theory. He has written on this subject before and understands the dilemma that this approach to literature poses: the deeper psychoanalysis probes, the further it moves from the literary surface and artistic values of the text—assuming, that is, that anything of very much value actually lies on the surface of a book or in what it seems to represent "in nature". Psychoanalysis shares the structuralist view that nothing in nature has very much value and certainly not the kind of value conventionally assigned to it. Value derives from what is called here "the symbolic operation" and the symbolic absence of value in things, by transforming, generating, displacing, and even reversing the truth until it looks presentable. If this view were

applied to political and social life, its implications would be extremely alarming.

As the title suggests, the crux of Flaubert's story is seen to be Oedipal, and the words in which Flaubert wonders whether he might in fact want to kill his father—and therefore does not "really" want to avoid doing so—are quoted again and again. (Mother is more of a problem, but there are jellies penetrating bottle-necks and does slaughtered as they suckle, not to speak of an orgy of bird-killings, to take care of her.) William Berg plays with Freudian readings: *le père* slips easily into leper; Julian sacrifices himself to the latter because he killed the former. This gets him as near as dammit back to the womb—naked as on the day he was born ("as Flaubert has it)—which is the bliss which passes all comprehension. Berg is concerned lest the reader find his hypothesis "somewhat disturbing", because it seems "to contradict to a certain degree the commonly accepted religious interpretation of the story as a positive salvation and ascension". So he consoles us by showing how, after all, the "Oedipus complex can be transcended". By "sharing" the narrator's point of view, we approach the Oedipal configuration from a different angle, that of the father, who seems to delight in the demise of the upstart son. All good clean fun really, when it's art.

For George Moskos, "Julian is absent from a great part of his own story, because he is *not born as an individual* until the last page." It is one of the first principles of psychoanalysis that the more something is said not to be there, the more it is there and the more it will show up (and vice versa). Julian's lacking but latent individuality is Julian's parlance to describe Flaubert's notoriously impersonal style. The distinctions between beastliness and beauty, fact and fantasy, body and soul, which that great decadent knew so well how to throw into disarray, are here pushed back into good spiritual order: individuality is taking place. Julian has to go through carnage, cruelty, massacres, parricide, matricide and leprous embrace. How else can he (or anyone?) expect to "recreate consciously the state of uroboric plenitude" and "eliminate the opposition introduced by consciousness"? Well, er . . . Listen:

We are in the world and cannot get out of it, even by detaching ourselves from human ends. Try as we might to reach a higher roost [sic], since our nature is evil, our intent will be to result from the outset, and the result can only be vice-ridden. . . . Consequently God's creatures can only struggle against themselves, and pursue with hatred for themselves a self-destruction. Reality must exist to negate itself through hatred; to make the vain attempt to transcend itself—through that religious call to the infinite—which can be born only in the finite—and to allow itself to be gnawed away by the imaginary, the ambiguous symbol of God.

It may have been unwise to include these pages by Sartre in this book. Certainly, he often pursues similar psychoanalytical lines of thought, but

he makes an overwhelming impression of knowing what he is talking about. Whether or not he is right about Flaubert, he understands profoundly the experience he describes at such length: it is his own. That is to say, he is not discussing in a scholarly way about another man's book. He knows personally what it means to want to "get out of the world, detaching ourselves from human ends"—and not to be able to. Just as he knows what it is like to be "gnawed away at by the imaginary, the ambiguous symbol of God". He is more terrible as an ambiguous symbol in literature than He is in the Bible; the gnawings of the imaginary become a form of religious experience. Literature looked to Sartre like temptation, the possibility after all of "getting out", of transcendence. In a godless, evil age, it was the temptation to believe in art, knowing it to be artifice. Was it a kind of illness that had enabled Flaubert to do this? Was it history that forced Sartre so manfully to struggle with words against words in order to confront the material needs of men?

Sartre recognizes the spiritual dilemma symbolized by Flaubert's story (the other contributors scarcely mention it): how can anything like saintliness ever have arisen out of the brutal realities of human existence? The central paradox, the point of the story, on which Flaubert insists by his manner of writing it, is indeed the relationship of religion—which is to say, of spiritual meaning in any form, of human values—to the unspeakable evil of the human heart. How is it possible for them to coexist? Psychoanalysis either reduces one to the other, or else simply mixes them up, with very little sense of what either of them may actually be like. Michel Grimaud, it is true, is on his guard against reductive techniques and symbol hunting (which produces slaughter on the scale of Julian's). He senses that psychoanalytic interpretation may be in danger of replacing the literary text by a theoretical one. "What is perhaps needed is a kind of two-column text where clinical material would parallel extracts from the work under study." This would presumably leave the psychoanalytic reader free to contemplate "the wealth of thematic systems" common to both, without actually believing in any of them.

Permeated by propositions

Geoffrey Hunter

GEORGE BEALER

Quality and Concept

311pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £20. 0 19 824428 2

George Bealer sets out to construct a logic adequate for dealing with intentional entities. But what is an "intentional entity"? The only explanation, if that is the right word, that Professor Bealer offers is that intentional entities are ones that need not be identical even if they are identical in extension. He gives no explanation at all of "extension". For Bealer the "extension" of a property appears to be the instances of the property. This notion is really not very clear, but I will press on. Let us suppose that all and only creatures with a heart are creatures with a kidney. Then the different properties, being a creature with a heart and being a creature with a kidney, are "identical in extension" and so the properties are "intentional entities". A moment's reflection suggests that, for any property you like to take, it might have been the case that both it and some other property belonged to exactly the same things. If that is right, then all properties are "intentional entities".

For exactly similar reasons all relations are "intentional entities". When one bit of seaweed gets entangled with another, the relation of entanglement between the two bits is an intentional entity, by Bealer's account. Of course, this account is not luminously clear, but there is no prospect of getting further clarification from his book, since he does not stop to consider the really essential preliminary questions.

Propositions are a different can of worms. What is the "extension" of a proposition? The answer Bealer gives

is: its truth-value (ie truth, or falsity, depending on whether it is true or false). You may well do a double-take at this. Why should the instances of a property and the truth or falsity of a proposition both be given the same label? No reason is given in this book, and for all we are told here the relation between property and instances and that between proposition and truth-value could have as little to do with each other as the relations expressed by "in" in "in a flood of tears" and "in a Bath chair". Anyway, the labelling of the truth-value as the "extension" allows Bealer to classify propositions as intentional entities, since two different propositions may have the same truth-value; and properties relations and propositions all go into the same basket. (Sets and John Smith go into a different one: at least I suppose that is so for John Smith, but since we are never told what an "extension" is I can't be sure.)

This zeugma of properties, relations and propositions comes as a bit of a jolt. After all, some properties and relations may be observed about us, but propositions ("the meanings of sentences") are not to be found lying around in the world, at least not if your theory of meaning is all right. And that's the trouble with Bealer. His isn't. The consequence is that his end is worse than his beginning.

According to J. M. Keynes, "G. E. Moore had a nightmare once in which he could not distinguish propositions from tables. But even when he was awake he could not distinguish love and beauty and truth from the furniture." Bealer ends in the same distressing condition. "Propositions permeate the world", they, together with properties and relations, "fit its logical, causal, and phenomenal order". There are simple ideas and complex ideas, and if an idea is fully analysed, qualities and connections, and perhaps particulars and stuffs,

enter in. The ultimate constituents of very many things are the ultimate constituents of the world: a true thought (and a thought is the meaning of a sentence) is formed from the same basic things as the world is, and in the same way, the only difference being that the thought is formed by means of thought-building operations whereas the world is formed by condition-building operations. According to Bealer, this "leads to promising solutions to some of the most central outstanding problems in classical modern philosophy". His theory of properties, relations and propositions is "a purely logical theory that is simultaneously a foundation for philosophy, psychology, theory of language, and mathematics".

What else? Well, belief is a relation between an individual and a proposition, and many metaphysical analyses in terms of cognitive commitment and being convinced (both left unanalysed). Set theory is born of confusion, and there is no good logical or pragmatic reason for it. Numbers should boldly be identified with properties, thus reopening the way for logicism. "12" occurs as a singular term in "There are 12 apostles". It is a desirable feature in a theory that it is consistent with Carnap's thesis of extensionality, whose "truth turns on an ongoing methodological conflict in logical theory". One can sense the condition that something coloured red is surrounded by something coloured blue quite independently of whether there actually is something coloured red surrounded by something coloured blue. Purely logical definitions can be given of intentionality, mental connection and consciousness; and mental life consists in having simple or complex ideas.

Is the book a bit cracked, then? Let us say, rather, that Bealer is an

enthusiast. It is true that there are large claims and great confidence and passionate commitment, that he skimps on essential preliminaries, that his theory of meaning was demolished long ago and that his theory of truth is gobbledygook, but the book contains good things. It is direct and not long-winded; Bealer's criticisms of others are, generally speaking, well worth thinking about; and his extensive formal work is at the service of his philosophy. In fact I much enjoyed the first 140 pages. But my sympathetic interest declined sharply when I was told in Part Three that there are essentially only two decent theories of meaning and semantics, Frege's and Russell's, and that Russell's ("the commonsense theory") apparently intended as a recommendation) has the edge on Frege's. This is rather like being told that there are essentially only two decent ways of running the country, Mr Heath's and Mrs Thatcher's, and that Mrs Thatcher's avoids some of the faults of Mr Heath's. Bealer defines x names y as x is a syntactically simple linguistic

subject and x means y , and x expresses y as x is a linguistic predicate or x is a symbolically complex expression and x means y . Genuine names stand in the same meaning relation to their meanings as do verbs to theirs. (So, if "Fido" is a genuine name, the meaning of "Fido" is Fido, and the name "Fido" stands in the same meaning relation to Fido as the verb "sits" to the meaning of the verb "sits".)

All Bealer's definitions in his final chapter on Mind involve the notion of a connection. So his claims to give purely logical definitions of intentionality, mind and consciousness require that he can do the same for the notion of a connection. He tries to do this in terms of the role of connections in the constitution of propositions. But that involves the stuff about the ultimate constituents of propositions being also the ultimate constituents of the world, and more generally his erroneous theories of meaning and truth. So his final claims are not well grounded.

The Clarendon Press systematically follows American spelling in this book.

Making room for mind

Jennifer Hornsby

HOWARD ROBINSON

Matter and Sense: A critique of contemporary materialism

130pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.50. 0 521 24471 4

Howard Robinson pictures the modern philosopher materialist as the soulless and destructive creature of the layman's image, a purveyor of obnoxious doctrines that require refutation in the name of humanity. But his attack on materialism in the bulk of his book is conducted in the driest terms, and it does not encourage us towards any new high-mindedness.

What conversion from materialism would achieve, Dr Robinson might say, is the proper view of oneself and other as *minded*. He thinks that the materialist cannot allow that we are conscious: the materialist needs to explain in physical terms what it is for someone to have something as an object of experience; and, this cannot be done, he claims. The knockdown argument is supposed to be provided by the case of the deaf scientist who specializes in the neurology of audition: however much knowledge he acquires, there is something he will never know - namely what it is like to hear. So science cannot account for the phenomena of mind.

Robinson allows that many modern materialists would say that they are not committed to any such extravagant view of science's pretensions as the deaf scientist precludes. They are (relatively speaking) weak materialists, who occupy one of three positions which Robinson distinguishes and argues against in turn. The toughest materialists of all deny the reality of phenomena that science does not speak to. And those who hold an intermediate view are characterized as believing that we can analyse statements about mental things into statements about physical things.

The intermediate group is heterogeneous; it includes the behaviourists and all of those who advocate some "causal" theory of mind; Robinson's characterization of this group is inaccurate; for some of these would say that *analysis* is not their business. And some of them share with occupants of the first position the belief that one can allow for an irreducibly subjective element in mental states without ceasing to be materialist.

One view at issue here is the view that science's account of things is incomplete in what it says about them, but complete on the less in saying something about them. Some things possess mental properties that are foreign to the scientific ideology, but these things also possess physical properties, potentially of interest to science. The irreducibility (in some senses) of the mental to the physical is then no obstacle to the thought that all the items that compose the natural

world are susceptible to scientific study.

To this view Robinson replies that it compels one to regard mental properties of events as causally inert and idle in explanation. The alleged reason is that if events have physical properties as well as mental, then it must be because of their physical properties, not their mental ones, that the events cause what they do. But we are never told why an event should not have both a physical property that made it a cause and a mental property that made it a cause. For all that Robinson shows, there might be one explanation of something's occurrence which used physical terms, and another, different, but still causal explanation of that same thing's occurrence which used mental terms.

But suppose (as might be) that there were problems with this. Would the problems undermine materialism? Perhaps mental events' physical properties are not their *causally* relevant properties. Or perhaps events have physical and mental properties, but it is not for *science* to say what the physical properties are. Or perhaps in seeing mental events as caught up causally with events that are physical if any are, we should come to see some point in regarding their mental properties themselves as physical - as fit as any others for characterizing the occupants of the natural world.

Robinson would probably deny that these modest views are really *materialist*; and certainly they are not defended as materialism in the current literature which supplies the objects of Robinson's attack. But it is never made plain why a materialist cannot settle for them: "materialism" is never defined; and we are never given any sense of materialism's source in intellectual perplexity, of what attracts philosophers to it.

Here one might say that it is the errors of dualism and idealism that lead philosophers to the views that Robinson finds outrageous. This diagnosis is shallow no doubt. But it ought to suit Robinson, because he takes it that materialism dualism and idealism exhaust the options. He speaks allusively of the "objectionable features of dualism"; so we are meant to believe that if we reject the views he attacks, and know as he does what is wrong with dualism, then we are, like Robinson himself, idealist.

The case for idealism is left to the last chapter where we have to contend with a degree of abstractness absent from the rest of the book. The point, I think, is that there is no non-mind-involving account of *matter*. If one doesn't quite see the force of the argument, one is reassured to be told that "the belief in mind-independent matter is too unclear to be clearly refuted".

One wonders how, though, why Robinson should have taken himself to have clearly refuted materialism. And why should the materialist (who, note well, is simply someone who rejects dualism and idealism) be obliged to give an account of matter in the analytical sort that Robinson has in mind?

The bounty of the tropics

Jean Gottmann

PIERRE GOUROU

Terres de Bonne Espérance: Le monde tropical
445pp. Paris: Plon.
2 259 00767 8

This is an important and thought-provoking book. The debate about the resources of the tropics, especially the wet, rainy tropics, has raged for centuries: Eldorado or green hell? Obviously neither, but what kind of development could be achieved in those vast sections of the Third World, and by what methods? Attention has once again focused on these questions recently as some of the larger and richer tropical nations - Mexico, Brazil, even Nigeria and Indonesia - have threatened with their financial problems to unsettle the international banking system.

A distinguished scholar in the great tradition of the French school of human geography, Pierre Gourou has devoted his life's work to the study of the tropics, and particularly of the rural life and potential of the rainy tropics. No other living geographer may claim a firsthand knowledge of comparable length, breadth and depth of the tropical belt around the globe. This new book - possibly a swan-song, for Gourou is eighty-two years old - sums up his conclusions with great scholarly skill though this is a more popular book, aimed at a wider audience, than the fourteen he has published previously. Among these the best known, especially to English readers, is his *Tropical World* (Longman, several editions between 1953 and 1980), a classic textbook on tropical geography and development which inspired generations of students and firmly established Gourou's reputation as a careful and learned analyst of the difficult and lasting problems of the tropics. It is all the more surprising that, to crown a career so permeated by a reputation for pessimism and at an age when so many turn gloomy, he should now have produced a book with the optimistic title of *Terres de Bonne Espérance*.

Gourou's basic message is new and could be explosive: the rainy tropics are the future bread-basket of an expanding humankind. Their agricultural potential is huge because of the abundance of sunshine and of water; they are utterly underdeveloped and undernourished, and largely undeveloped because undernourished; the essential weakness of the tropics lies

not at all in their natural conditions, which suggest rather agricultural bounty. But in socio-economic circumstances attributable to the history of the world mainly over the past 500 years. Mankind now has the means to modify gradually these circumstances and take full advantage of the tropics' enormous potential.

The argument is developed on a broad historical geographical canvas. Gourou refutes the frequently repeated allegations about the poverty of tropical soils and vegetation, about the violence and extremes of the climate, and about the insalubriousness and "indolence" which these induce. These allegations are shown to be contradictory well-established facts. The tropics have harboured past civilizations as advanced as any known in temperate or arid zones: in India, southern China, Java, Cambodia, and the Maya in Central America. The deltas of tropical rivers in South Asia have supported large and dense populations using elaborate agricultural techniques. Temperate environments have been just as insalubrious in the past as the rainy tropics may be at present; only the diseases they have fostered have been somewhat different. It is the medical research, the health regulations and the public works developed in recent centuries that have made the northern latitudes healthier; similar progress could be achieved in the tropics. The agriculture of temperate and arid zones has been greatly enriched by plants borrowed from tropical agriculture where these crops were first developed, eg. maize, rice, soya, cotton, tomato, citrus fruits, etc. Indeed, tropical agriculture has been infinitely more varied and innovative than what might be claimed by temperate farming. In recent times agricultural science and technology have been developed mainly by and for the northern countries. If similar efforts were applied to the tropics, the cultivated area could be extended many times over and the yields much improved. (This has already been demonstrated on a small scale in several places: Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Queensland and various regions of India and Indonesia.)

One important geographical disparity puzzles Gourou: almost all the dense populations and advanced cultures that arose in the past independently from Europe and the Mediterranean are to be found in south and south-east Asia. No comparable civilizations appear to have been native to the rainy tropics in Africa, Oceania and America, with the exception of the Maya. Nor did any arise in the

temperate zones and the rich soils of North America, the Argentine Pampa, New Zealand or Tasmania. All these lands seem to have been denied the cross-fertilization that developed between the many cultures of the vast land-mass of Eurasia. Here Gourou introduces, with the size and distribution of the continents, an element of physical determinism, but his reasoning is essentially based on the factors of contact and exchange between cultures, density of population and the accidents of history.

The French school of geography, illustrated by Vidal de la Blache, Albert Demangeon, Jules Sion and others, has long emphasized these factors (*formations de densité, vie de relations*, etc) and the method of broad comparison between regions. Gourou was trained in this tradition and inspired by these very teachers. His method of careful regional analysis based on firsthand data systematically gathered in the field, stems from this source and permeates his work. *Terres de Bonne Espérance* is densely packed with detailed personal observations of landscapes, communities and everyday events in Vietnam, Amazonia and Burundi; and the observations are supported and enriched by a wealth of facts from books and documents of every kind. Gourou writes with elegance. He excels in drawing brief vignettes of village scenes, forested sites or simple people at work. As a writer he is an even better miniaturist than an analyst, although he remains a redoubtable debater. Each of his vignettes or anecdotes makes a point relevant to a major argument. He obviously agrees with the sentence from Stendhal that he cites: that "il n'y a de force et de vérité que dans les détails".

In the first 156 pages of his book Gourou paints the great fresco which exonerates the rainy tropics and their inhabitants from the inferiority too long and too often ascribed to them. Once the possibility of developing their bounteous potential is demonstrated, he proceeds to analyse their existing ills and strengths problem by problem and country by country, and suggests practical measures and policies which he believes could lead to greater and more rapid improvement than by the policies currently being followed. Gourou is wary of rapid change, of applying Western models directly to tropical problems. The tropics he describes are poor and backward because of the ignorance and isolation of weak and scattered populations oppressed by their own beliefs and taboos, particularly in terms of food

and family structure, and frequently by semi-feudal social systems. What must evolve, therefore, is not only technology and landownership but the whole traditional culture of the local society. Such evolution may be obtained by gradual, careful nursing of each regional case according to its circumstances.

Some general principles emerge: the urgent need for more agronomical research on tropical plants and soils for general education, especially of women, for easy small-scale credit offered by non-profit-making institutions. But practical methods of approach must be tailored to the requirements of each specific group, whose diversity is great. All this, however, concerns essentially rural populations and agricultural development. Only rarely does Gourou touch on urban or suburban situations. He has never appreciated or understood the dynamics of urbanization, still less of the modern large city. He knows that peasants, disgusted with the miserable life of the countryside, may find life preferable in city slums, but he is concerned with the peasantry and with agricultural development in a difficult period when the city is seen as the engine of growth, hope and even education.

To appreciate fully Gourou's thought and wisdom, we should recall the early stages of his career. Fascinated by the crowded plains of the Far East he spent ten years (1926-35) teaching at the *lycée* in Hanoi and studying carefully and enthusiastically the Tonkin deltas, one of the most densely populated rural areas in the world. Of the 6,000 villages of the delta he visited and analysed in detail some 2,000. He learned from colleagues, both French and Vietnamese, and from his pupils, among whom were Vietnamese boys from the delta (one of these became General Vo Nguyen Giap). This research produced a monumental volume, *Les Paysans du Delta du Tonkin* (1939), which remains the great classic on Vietnam. Gourou next extended his studies to other plains of Indochina. In 1937 he was appointed to the Chair of Geography at the Free University of Brussels, a solid base from which to study the populations of Zaïre and Rwanda. Elected in 1947 to the Chair of Tropical Studies at the Collège de France in Paris, but still keeping his position in Brussels, he could roam the whole breadth of the tropics. It was an enormously complicated and varied field, and rural problems alone have sufficed to fill a long and active working life.

Gourou's vision of agricultural development would have benefited substantially if he had given greater attention to the role of cities and their relation to rural production. Since ancient times, the city has needed access to agricultural surpluses for survival, and has caused such surpluses to be produced within its reach. Indeed, Gourou observes that successful tropical farming in Brazil or West Africa has recently developed around growing cities (he mentions, eg. Belem de Para, Brasília, Ouagadougou, etc). But the true relationship is broader and deeper, and had he realized this, it might have helped better to structure his somewhat rambling array of suggestions for the immediate improvement of tropical agriculture.

As in any book of such size and scope, there are some repetitions, a few self-contradictions, chiefly when economics are being discussed, and a few irrelevant paragraphs that were clearly on both the author's notes and his mind. But the reader must not cavil: this is the intellectual testament of a great scholar. It makes pleasant reading, and it is convincing as long as Gourou is dealing with the potential of the tropics and the slacks currently imposed on it by a history which has defeated their geography. Less satisfying, however, are the concluding recommendations and solutions. These are helpful, cautious but patchy. One feels that Gourou is avoiding many economic and political factors, which he often hints at with a sort of melancholy wisdom, as if they were merely transient phenomena. After all, he is a specialist in the rural tropics, not a general practitioner, and his thought certainly remains influenced by all that he knows of the geography and recent history of Indochina, which is enough to make anyone wary of predicting and prescribing.

A lesson takes shape, as one reflects upon this book, and considers the stages by which different environments have been transformed by the march of civilization. The deformation of huge areas in Asia, Europe and North America provided the ground for strong agriculturally based cultures, while in recent centuries grasslands and steppes where nomads once roamed have been turned into the granaries of the world, in the Prairies, the Pampa, the Ukraine and Australia. Now the time has come to develop the bounty of the tropics: it will be done gradually and differently by an urban-based civilization. The process elsewhere was never really planned or orderly: probably it will not be so for the tropics, either.

The world established

Gregory Desjardins

DAVID HALLIBURTON

Poetic Thinking: An Approach to Heidegger

235pp. University of Chicago Press. £15.75. 0 226 31372 7

In the mid-1930s, Heidegger began writing studies of German poetry, which made their appearance chiefly in two collections, *Illuminations of Hölderlin's Poetry* and *On the Way to Language*. In addition, he occasionally incorporated literary analyses into other works, notably of Greek poets in expositions of the Greek philosophers. In these discussions of literature, Heidegger undertakes to re-examine the nature of poetry in a manner that he himself aptly describes as poetic, in that it delights in the multiple meanings of the words chosen and plays on the root meaning of terms. David Halliburton's *Poetic Thinking* is devoted to Heidegger's study of poetry, whose development it traces with the intention of making it familiar to students of literature. The first word of his title therefore has a double sense; the thinking in question concerns poetry and is at the same time akin to

Heidegger's thought is guided by the question of what "being" means. In *Being and Time* the everyday use of this as a term is shown to presuppose contexts in which to use it is ready to hand; for instance, leaving the house, I open the door by turning the knob. As long as the tool works it is embedded in its context unobtrusively, but if it breaks then its use to its context is severed and the context itself appears in an unusual light. What makes it possible for something to be present, at a place only thanks to a wider network that is already there and allows things to be presented before us. This context of contexts Heidegger calls the world: the way the world is cannot be reduced to the being of present beings.

After *Being and Time* language and speech assume the role of establishing the world, through the correspondence between words and the being of things. Words are used to refer to things whether they are present or not, and naming implies an awareness that things remain themselves when absent, that they still are although they are not here in front of us. Further, in talking about things, we manifest them and make them known. Speaking about things does not alter them perceptibly; that is, the showing of things and their features by speech is itself not part of what is shown, rather it lets things appear without being something that itself appears. Such considerations lead Heidegger to take a particular people's way of saying things - their language - as disclosing and preserving their world; his lectures discuss in detail the differences between the Greek and the Roman worlds in relation to the differences between their languages.

Heidegger's writings on poetry deal mainly with poets who write about poetry, who reflect on the relations of words to things. Stefan George's poem "The Word", for example, suggests that the relation between word and thing is the condition for there being anything; since we come to appreciate that things are the same in both presence and absence in naming them, evidently things are constituted as such by being paired with names. Neither name nor named exists in isolation from the other; they occur together. As Heidegger puts it, "without the retaining word, the whole of things, 'world', sinks away into darkness, together with the 'I'".

Halliburton's account is a generally faithful yet selective paraphrase of all Heidegger's important work on this issue, along with a number of helpful side-lights from other authors. He has read the works on which he is commenting in the original, and frequently expresses what Heidegger writes in felicitous English. His interpretation stays close to the text, attempting to recover the direction and movement of Heidegger's own thought, nevertheless, in his restatement this direction is not always clear enough, and strategic distinctions are sometimes obscured.

In this regard, it is curious that Halliburton fails to appreciate fully that poetry provides a counter-example. He takes exception to Heidegger's claim that in Greek tragedy "the battle of the new gods against the old is being fought", on the grounds that a linguistic work, being less tangible than a statue, could not embody a god in the same way; and yet reading Heidegger's words might cause one to imagine being present at the *Oresteia*'s first performance. Nor does Halliburton draw attention here to Heidegger's remarks about the poet's concern with the divine in "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry", written in the next year. On the connection between these two essays, it is misleading for Halliburton to say that the second starts where the first finishes; that having concluded in "The Origin" that all art is essentially poetry, Heidegger then turns to formulating the essence of poetry; for in identifying art with poetry, Heidegger differentiates a narrower sense, in which poetry is only one of the arts, from a wider sense, in which it is common to all the arts; poetry in the latter sense is defined in the first essay as the founding of truth as unhiddenness, while the definition given in the essay on Hölderlin is of poetry in the former sense.

Heidegger's account of things is incomplete in what it says about them, but complete on the less in saying something about them. Some things possess mental properties that are foreign to the scientific ideology, but these things also possess physical properties, potentially of interest to science. The irreducibility (in some senses) of the mental to the physical is then no obstacle to the thought that all the items that compose the natural

world are susceptible to scientific study. To this view Robinson replies that it compels one to regard mental properties of events as causally inert and idle in explanation. The alleged reason is that if events have physical properties as well as mental, then it must be because of their physical properties, not their mental ones, that the events cause what they do. But we are never told why an event should not have both a physical property that made it a cause and a mental property that made it a cause. For all that Robinson shows, there might be one explanation of something's occurrence which used physical terms, and another, different, but still causal explanation of that same thing's occurrence which used mental terms.

In shaman country

Paul Henley

FLORINDA DONNER

Shabono
305pp. Bodley Head. £9.95.
0 370 30494 2

A generation ago, the Western world's archetype of this "primitive" way of life was modelled on that of the Samoans, New Guineans and the Pacific Islanders. They were conceived of as gentle people, for the most part, who grew up into recognizably decent human beings even though they beat their children less often and allowed their daughters more premarital sex than we did.

But the times have changed and so has the archetype: now it is the Yanomamo who act as the model. There are about 20,000 of them scattered over a vast forest that spans the Venezuelan-Brazilian border. Apart from occasional intrusions into history, when they ambushed a group of explorers or traders crossing over the rapids of the upper Orinoco, they had virtually no contact with the outside world until the 1950s. Then the missionaries came to save their souls. Next came the anthropologists to record their way of life. They brought with them the medicines which took samples of every imaginable Yanomamo bodily product and

counted heads, identifying a couple of Yanomamo allies as they did so. Then came the coffee-table photographers and documentary film-makers, followed by an experimental theatre group from Denmark which tried to engage in an artistic exchange with the Yanomamo shamans, renowned for their dramatic representations of the spirits of the forest once they got a headful of hallucinogenic stuff. Nowadays it is easy for tourists to want to do something different to fly down from Caracas for a quiet weekend's ethnography. Most sinister of all has been the invasion of the southern part of Yanomamo territory by Brazilian ranchers and tin miners, an invader's invasion has been denounced by Survival International and similar organizations but so far to only limited effect.

Willily nilly, the Yanomamo have become media celebrities. Today, almost every English-speaking student in anthropology is encouraged to read, in the first term, a simple monograph about them written by Napoleon Chagnon, one of the first anthropologists to study them in any depth. The monograph's title, *The Fierce People*, refers to the Yanomamo tradition of internecine raiding, the purpose of which is said to be the capture of women and/or to avenge the deaths of the men killed when the village doing the raiding was itself raided a few years previously. Given the propensity of the society to

warfare, in which only the men engage, boys are preferred to girls and therefore a policy of selective female infanticide is followed. The resilient imbalance in the sex ratio encourages the raiding of neighbouring villages to provide the young men with wives and the older men with further wives. Thus the Yanomamo appear to be caught in one of those vicious circles that preoccupy game theorists and nuclear strategists. Indeed, the parallels between nuclear brinkmanship and Yanomamo warfare have been examined in all seriousness in the pages of *Time* magazine.

As a graduate student in anthropology, Florinda Donner was probably exposed to the Yanomamo literature early in her career. No doubt she was therefore only too glad to accept the offer of an airplane lift to the Yanomamo region, when she should have been grafting away on her doctoral research into the folk medicine of the Venezuelan coast. While her friends took off hunting, Ms Donner went looking for a shaman at the Yanomamo settlement up-river. Although she originally intended to stay only for a few days, she ended up spending a year there. Luckily, from the point of view of her acceptance by the Yanomamo, her field notebooks were all burnt for fun by the Yanomamo children early on in her stay. This made her seem like an outsider and she was meretriciously taken into the village where, her sense of time and space altered by some unidentified

potions, she spends what appear to be several days copulating with a Yanomamo shaman intent on capturing her soul. Fortunately for the author, and for her readers, he felt in his attempt and she lives to tell this tale.

For anyone interested in the Yanomamo, rather than in Ms Donner's adventures, whether or not she did the things she describes is really neither here nor there: more important is the picture of Yanomamo life that she presents. From this point of view, the most unsatisfactory aspect of the book is the range of personalities that she describes. All her Yanomamo talk like middle-class Europeans who have developed an elliptical turn of phrase from reading the works of Carlos Castaneda. This image of the Yanomamo contrasts sharply with the one given in *Yanomamo*, the remarkable autobiography of Helena Valero, a Brazilian who was kidnapped as a girl by a Yanomamo raiding party, or in *Le Cercle des Feux*, Jacques Lizot's riveting description of Yanomamo life based on ten years' anthropological fieldwork. These books present Yanomamo society as structured by values so alien to our own that the most we can aim for is to understand it, since to sympathize with it is impossible. If the Yanomamo are indeed some sort of archaic, pre-civilized, nuclear state, God help us all, for the fate of the world is sealed.

Living by the loom

David Parker

J. K. J. THOMSON

Clermont-de-Lodève 1633-1789: Fluctuations in the prosperity of a Languedocian cloth-making town 502pp. Cambridge University Press. £32.50. 0 521 23951 6

Situated about twenty-five miles from Montpellier between the barren hills that descend from the Cévennes and the fertile coastal plain, Clermont (l'Hérault formerly Clermont-de-Lodève) is a market town of some 6,000 inhabitants, dependent largely on the vine and with a small reputation as a health station. Physically little larger than it was in the late fourteenth century, when its population was already touching the 5,000 mark, Clermont, like so many communities of the *midi*, has been by-passed by the forces of industrialization. Yet for much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was in the vanguard of Languedoc's burgeoning textile industry, which for a time rivalled and probably outshone that of northern France. Between 1715 and 1756 Clermont was one of only three towns in the province allowed to produce fine woollen cloth for the Levant. Providing between a quarter and a half of the produce soaked up by this rapidly expanding export trade the clothiers of Clermont prospered.

In mid-century, however, the clothing industry of Clermont and a number of other centres entered a period of crisis from which they never fully recovered. J. K. J. Thomson's prime concern is to explain this outcome; and he does so by means of a rich and extended analysis which combines a lucid presentation of detail with a compellingly broad perspective.

Rejecting the idea that the changing fortunes of Clermont can be elucidated merely by reference to fluctuations in the market or foreign competition (significant though these were) Dr Thomson develops his argument around two closely interrelated themes. The first is the recurrent cycle of growth and stagnation which he presents as an inherent characteristic of pre-industrial manufacture and as itself inextricably bound up with the tendency of entrepreneurs to transform themselves into merchants, landowners and *rentiers*.

Empirically, the study confirms what many others have shown: that the first half of the seventeenth century was a period of growth and the second one of contraction, until the 1690s somewhat uncertainly ushered in the five decades of renewed expansion which preceded the final collapse. Characteristic of the periods of expansion was a growing division of labour, indicated most obviously by the existence of a number of specialist dyers, a concentration of capital in the hands of an élite of merchant clothiers, and a consequent widening of the economic and social gap between them and the majority of weavers. By contrast (the contraction of the post-1650 period) was associated with a return to the small-scale production of low-quality cloth which required minimal investment, and a reduction in the divide between the weavers and clothiers. Indeed, best equipped to survive were the artisanal, family-based units which could utilize their own labour and sustain themselves from their own plots of land. In the following period of recovery, which was far from steady - there were four severe shorter crises between 1699 and 1720 - it was the artisanal, manually proficient entrepreneurs who proved most adaptable. Out of thirty-one families known to have been producing for the Levant barely half survived and

without exception these occupied a middling to low position in Clermont's hierarchy of wealth and status. Not only did the richer merchants lack the cushion of family resources, often expelling younger sons into the wider world in order to preserve the family patrimony, but they tended to treat their cloth-making ventures in a speculative rather than entrepreneurial fashion, over-investing wildly.

Yet - and this is but one of the many splendid nuances in Thomson's analysis - it was out of this uncertain situation, and from the ranks of the industrious artisans, that there emerged a new type of clothier, possessing by the 1720s fourteen or fifteen looms and employing an average of 300 workers. In 1632 twenty-two clothiers were utilizing the services of a work-force of some 5,500, literally depriving other industries such as hat-making of labour and causing widespread abandonment of land-holdings in the neighbouring countryside. Once again the prospering clothiers began to detach themselves from the smaller producers and to take steps to reinforce their position. In 1708 a new clothiers' corporation was established and the mastership fee raised from a mere 6 *livres* to a whopping 450. Other restrictive measures culminated in the decision in 1737 to exclude all but the sons and sons-in-law of existing masters.

At this point we encounter the second of Thomson's major themes: the way in which government intervention intensified the processes generated by the manufacturing cycle. Wedded to the belief that only rigorous state control could ensure the co-operation of the manufacturers and thus the necessary supplies of high-quality cloth, the government was a willing defender of merchant clothier exclusivity and monopoly practices. It not only encouraged the development of guilds in the traditionally free areas

of the *midi* but was responsible for limiting the production of high-quality cloth to Clermont, Carcassonne and St. Chinian. At the same time these towns were prohibited from producing lower-grade cloth. The ultimate stage in this process was the "fixation" system of 1741, which apportioned production quotas to the various clothiers on the basis of the quality of their wares. An attempt was also made to direct the labour force in accordance with the quotas, which were revised every year. To ensure that the regulations were enforced Languedoc's inspectorate was increased. Inevitably, such a system encouraged the clothiers to become not merely managers, as the size of their enterprises now required, but manipulators of officials and regions, utilizing their protected position to seek easy profits. That is, until the market for cloth in the Levant began, partly as a result of English penetration, to become much less certain and the merchants of Marseille switched from exporting cloth to local commodities. At this juncture the total dependence of the Clermontais on the export of woollen cloth via Marseille became a major weakness.

Their position was made even more perilous by the government's dramatic abandonment of mercantilist controls. Concerned by the failure of these to have the desired effect, and visibly impressed by the success of England's liberal practices, the government began in 1754 to dismantle its restrictive legislation. Within a few years there was effective freedom of manufacture in Languedoc. A rapid increase in the number of clothiers and levels of production ensued, together with a serious drop in quality. Faced with problems in the Levant and the disruptions of the Seven Years' War, Clermont's textile industry was manifestly over-extended. Almost inevitably there followed the mass withdrawal of the clothing élite from production and a flight into commerce, the land or *rentier* activities. Of thirty-six cloth-making concerns recorded in Clermont in 1753 only four remained in the 1780s. Although these were gradually replaced by a new generation of clothiers, the survival rate was low, the newcomers being hampered by their lack of capital and experience.

Moreover the possibility of a further repetition of the cyclical process was precluded by the development of England's capital-intensive and technically advanced textile industry. Clermont remained a centre of hand-loom weaving, and of hat and stocking production; encouraged by government tax concessions, sections of the populace also returned to cultivating the land.

This in essence is the thesis

presented by Thomson. Unfortunately such a bald précis cannot convey the richness with which the central points are elaborated, or, indeed, qualified where appropriate. One of the most significant sections of the book - almost a story in itself - deals with the foundation in 1674, just outside Clermont, of Villeneuve. Said to be Languedoc's most magnificent royal manufactory this was an entirely self-contained institution providing homes and workshops for sixty families together with all the supporting services from a chapel to a tavern. Although its initial dependence on the great financiers of Languedoc, who alone could furnish the enormous sums required, nearly brought disaster, and although Villeneuve had to overcome major managerial and entrepreneurial weaknesses, it not only survived but remained active until 1954. Moreover, as Thomson shows in one of his most effective passages, it played an instrumental role in first attracting a specialized workforce from distant parts and then disseminating its skills among the local population. Virtually all the clothier families who overcame the difficulties of the early eighteenth century had significant connections with the royal manufactory. Its role as a generator of skill and experience is crucial to Thomson's argument, notwithstanding his generally adverse comments on the effects of state intervention. His analysis makes an outstanding contribution to our understanding of the impact of the state on French economic development.

It should now be plain that this is not a narrowly economic study. Statistics are kept to the necessary minimum, being outweighed by the number of photographs, and the technicalities of cloth production he is far from intimidating. His vision is broad and there is much of interest about the general structure of Clermontais society and the families, and indeed the houses, of those who composed it.

No doubt there will be those who will be critical of certain assumptions which permeate the study. One wonders for instance about Thomson's disregard for the problems created by the lack of an expanding home market. Yet such reservations arise only because of his determination to deal with fundamental questions in a large way. It is no mean achievement to combine a major contribution to French local history with such a broad and penetrating analysis of the pre-industrial economy. Given the general usefulness of this work it does, however, seem somewhat short-sighted not to have translated the substantial French quotations.

Fighting for France

Antony Brett-James

RAYMOND HORRICKS

Marshal Ney: The Romance and the Real 283pp. Tunbridge Wells: Midas. £12.50. 0 88254 655 4

Napoleon's marshals were a formidable group: brave, sometimes brilliant, too often squabbling jealously with one another. They could be vain, obstinate, impulsive, avaricious. None was a military genius, and it cannot be said for certain what they could have achieved, either collectively or individually, without the genius of Napoleon to order, guide, rebuke, praise, cajole and spur them.

Of their glittering number few stand out in history or in folk memory with such heroic, tragic *éclat* as Michel Ney. He was by no means the most intelligent strategist or tactician. His impatience and impulsiveness got him into scrapes, as at Jena. His abrupt switch of loyalty from Louis XVIII to Napoleon in 1815 has been hotly debated. Marshal Ney is best remembered for his superb bravery, for his inspiring leadership on numerous fields of battle, for his epic rearguard action during the retreat from Moscow. He is remembered too for his conduct at Quatre Bras and

Waterloo, now hesitant, now rash, often clumsy and uncoordinated, or desperate, even suicidal. The humiliations of his trial for treason and the dignified courage with which he faced the firing squad and himself gave the order to fire are not forgotten. "I have fought a hundred battles for France and not one against her," he declared.

In this detailed biography Raymond Horricks has endeavoured to explain the contradictory sides of Ney's character and performance, what he calls "the Romance and the Real". He states disarmingly that he is "a great professional historian not a great expert in military affairs", but his honesty and his descriptions of a journey in search of Ney are engaging. He has researched widely in secondary sources in English and in French, though he could to advantage have examined the memoirs of Colonel Octave Levasseur and Colonel Bienne-François Girard, both of whom served on Ney's staff between 1806 and 1814. Horricks keeps a reasonable balance between Ney the soldier and Ney the human being, and affords us some agreeable glimpses of the Marshal happily at home in Paris or at Courbevoie with his wife Aglaé and their four sons. Very occasionally, and then some of the detail is of marginal relevance, but his book is consistently interesting, and has vigour and colour, as befits its subject.

Roots and uproots

Gämini Salgado

GUY AMIRTHANAYAGAM (Editor)
Writers in East-West Encounter:
New Cultural Bearings
218pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 27342 7

Most of the papers collected in this volume were first delivered at a colloquium held some five years ago at the East-West Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii. The blurb misleadingly describes the contributors as "writers from around the Pacific" though in fact only four of the eleven fit the description - the Japanese Kenzaburo Oe, the Australian Tom Keneally, the New Zealander Janet Frame and Albert Wendt from Oceania. A further volume containing contributions from the rest of the twenty-five members of the original colloquium is promised.

In his introduction the editor, a Sri Lankan critic and poet, outlines the nature, purpose and scope of the conference and the brief given to the contributors:

The writers who attended the Honolulu two-week meeting had been asked to think in particular about the following topics: the nature of literature in relation to its roots in language and ethnic groups; the role of the English language in the new world literature of the late twentieth century; and the question of the writer as an exile of either the enforced or the self-chosen variety.

Any one of these topics would have served to keep an average gathering of writers and/or intellectuals talking for at least two weeks, especially in a place like Honolulu. One's misgivings are anything but dispelled by the two long interviews with Allen Ginsberg (one given to the editor) with which the volume opens. Entitled "Buddhist Meditation and Poetic Spontaneity" they contain some interesting comments (following William Carlos Williams and Charles Olson) on the importance of breath as a basic element in poetry (one of Ginsberg's recent collections is called *Mix Breaths*) and the relation between Imagism and the Japanese *haiku*, but the excessively deferential tone of both interviews produces a great deal of flabby self-indulgence from the Californian guru.

After this the brisk matter-of-factness of Tom Keneally's contribution has a bracing effect. It is odd but oddly stimulating too, to find a novelist writing what is in effect a critical introduction to his own novel, but *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* is, as Keneally says, still the only novel which examines the impact of European culture on the Aboriginal mind from the standpoint of the latter, and is virtually unknown in this country outside department stores.

Keneally's remarks will surely prompt many readers to hunt out the novel for themselves. My only regret is that Keneally sees no occasion to discuss, even in passing, the presence of the Aboriginal theme in the work of Patrick White.

Kenzaburo Oe's very brief paper refers to the ingrained centripetal tendency of Japanese culture, embodied in literature and life-style by Yukio Mishima, and the need he sees for shifting attention from the new centre, Europe and America, "towards the vital culture of our own peripheral areas. It must mean the redefinition of the Japanese as a people among other peripheral Asian peoples." Given the economic hegemony of Japan and its technological superiority it is difficult to see how this doubly worthy aim is to be realized. The attempt to illustrate the centripetal tendency in Japanese culture through its creation myths is also unconvincing. The progress from chaos to hierarchical order is virtually a generalized description of all creation myths, not a distinctive feature of the Japanese variety.

But things get better as one reads on. Wole Soyinka contributes a characteristically trenchant and perceptive paper on "The New African" in the post-colonial phase, identifying the two enemies of authentic African cultures as

European imperialism and Arab-Islamic penetration. He discusses and illustrates various responses of the African writer to his cultural situation - "ethnic submission", Negritude, "unmediated exposition", the building of stylistic bridges and so on. Soyinka's concluding plea for a proper recognition of traditional culture against the wilder ravings of vulgar Marxism is as eloquent as it is timely. It finds a pallid echo in R. K. Narayan's slight piece whose unexceptionable banalities are worth following through for the sake of the final paragraph which provides a link between an episode of the *Ramayan* and Narayan's fine novel *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*.

Poets are represented by A. K. Ramanujan and R. S. Parthasarathy, though the former (who is also professionally concerned with anthropology) takes as his theme the many and various ways in which cultures engage with each other. Parthasarathy's is the most subjective essay in the book, dealing with his first encounters with the English language, his great expectations of England and how they were shattered, and his decision to abandon writing poetry in English for the Tamil language in which he feels he is, or must be, rooted. It is a decision which those who know his poetry, even though the extracts given here, can only regret, a point well argued by William Walsh in a long essay in this volume dealing with the different relationship between language and literature in Britain and in some developing countries. Walsh's essay also examines some poems by another distinguished Indian poet writing in English, Nissim Ezekiel.

The other papers include one by Janet Frame on the subtleties and hazards of cross-cultural encounters and a long, sensitive and impassioned account of three twentieth-century poets by the editor which deserves a less ponderously off-putting title than "Pontifex and Scapegoat: The Poet in Twentieth-Century Western Culture". The final paper by the Oceanian writer Albert Wendt conveniently summarizes most of the right questions:

- Is there such a creature as traditional culture?
- If there is, what period in the growth of a culture is to be called traditional?
- If traditional cultures do exist... to what extent are they colonial creations?
- What is authentic culture?
- Is the differentiation we usually make between the culture(s) of our urban areas (meaning foreign) and those of our rural areas (meaning traditional) a valid one?

It is heartening to find these and related questions raised and discussed by writers and intellectuals. The truly encouraging news would be that their discussions were heard and heeded by those who control the dissemination of "culture" in the areas concerned.

The chequered South

Rupert Christiansen

JOHN PIKOULIS
The Art of William Faulkner
242pp. Macmillan. £17.50.
0 333 30094 7

JOHN T. MATTHEWS
The Play of Faulkner's Language
278pp. Cornell University Press.
£14.75.
0 8014 1413 X

The novels of Faulkner, like those of Hardy, Compton-Burnett, or even Emily Brontë, exist in an imagined but specific and enclosed landscape, which delimits the possibilities of experience. Later in his career, Faulkner also seems to have felt an increasing pressure to become the chronicler of Yoknapatawpha County, its official historian, rather than simply using it as

Elite performances

Dennis Walder

MICHAEL ETHERTON

The Development of African Drama
368pp. Hutchinson. £12 (paperback, £5.95).
0 09 146420 X

One of the themes in *The Development of African Drama* is that those who would preserve the traditional culture of Africa are actually destroying it, encouraging the desire to perfect the arts of performance, but at the cost of losing touch with the community which alone gives them meaning and value. The culture planners, academics, playwrights and theatre directors who want to rescue the traditions ravaged by long years of "colonialism and settlerism" may mean well, but they do not understand the "cultural dynamics" of what they are doing. A more cynical view might suggest that by making popular dances or theatre into an art form for the urban élite, the ruling class are deliberately inculcating their own new, Western-oriented and individualist ideas. In either case, according to Michael Etherton, the "mass of the people" are deprived of their living art, their culture. His main point is an important one: "if we are thinking of the whole population in a society, it does not seem possible to talk about the development of theatre and drama in that society without analysing the future of its economic and political development".

Etherton offers a lengthy series of accounts of the conditions which have led up to and which surround the production and performance or publication of a wide range of plays from various parts of (mainly Anglophone) Africa. The plays are categorized according to the issues which his overall approach suggests: the survival of orally transmitted theatre; the growth of "literary" or "art" theatre; and the institutions which promote it; the relationship between written texts and performance; "protest" theatre; and so on. There is detailed discussion of the work of individual playwrights such as Soyinka, Ngugi, Ama Ata Aidoo, Rotimi, Ebrahim Hussein, as well as of such groups as the South African "Workshop 71" and Serpent Players, Gibson Kente's troupe and Herbert Ogunde's Yoruba Travelling Theatre.

There is too much in this book. Etherton's argument is muffled by detail, by production reports, plot summaries and anecdotes. It is illuminating to learn how the Nigerian playwright John Pepper Clark became obsessed with the *Ijo* saga he heard as a boy of nine, which eventually emerged as his English-language play *Ozidi* - and now co-exists with recordings of the "original" narrative performed on cine-film, sound-tape, long-playing record - and it is an added, delightful irony that, years after he had graduated from university and received various academic honours, Pepper Clark sought out the storyteller of his childhood, only to discover

that the man, by then a seaman on ships from Lagos to Liverpool, had completely forgotten the saga. But do we also then need a further fifteen-page summary of the saga and the play which came out of it?

Etherton clearly knows his material - especially that derived from parts of Africa with which he is familiar: he was born and brought up in Zambia, where he went to teach and help promote drama in the rural areas, and he now works as Reader in Drama at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria. In other areas his knowledge is at times shaky: his report on, for example, South African black theatre, is very selective and derived largely from the now out-of-date information in Robert Kavanagh's notes to *South African People's Plays*. In any case, to have released himself from the numbing weight of description might have allowed Etherton to confront his own argument more directly. He is refreshingly honest about the fact that, as he puts it, his book will inevitably add to the problem it seeks to identify: that of the transformation of art into products of consumption for an intellectual élite. He admits that for the moment there seems to be no way out, "except to try and understand more clearly the processes by which society shapes its art". But his attack upon the familiar "Euro-centred" approach to African drama by critics who rely on absolute assumptions (derived ultimately from Aristotle) is somewhat weakened by his inability to acknowledge the European tradition upon which he himself relies - the tradition of Marx and Macherey.

Clarity about such matters is always important, of course; but it is vital when, as here, his critic addresses students. No doubt the African student audience Etherton has in mind (and others) will be grateful for his glossing of such terms as "proscenium arch", "perspective" and "naturalism"; perhaps even for the definitions offered of "act", "scene" and "dialogue". But when, at the same time, such phrases as "Whig ascendancy" and "the late bourgeois world" go by without definition, much less explanation, then something seems to be wrong. Or are such terms common to the "educated" and understood among the intellectual "élite", as opposed to the "masses" we hear so much about?

Etherton's aesthetic, apparently relies on a notion of "mass" audience as its main criterion of value. This has its use, since for too long the accessibility of drama and its function in the community in Europe no less than in Africa, have been ignored or undervalued. But there are other criteria, too. And Michael Etherton's approach tends to lead to a preoccupation with the kind of work which inevitably confirms what the "mass" audience wants. Is there no place for the drama which subverts or undermines, which tries to release people from the grip of ideology - any ideology? Or is it only the "élite" who can, guiltily, criticize their own position?

Rifts in the lute

Imre Salusinszky

KRISTIAN SMIDT

Unconformities in Shakespeare's History Plays
207pp. Macmillan. £17.50.
0 333 32389 0

According to Shelley, Milton "conceived the Paradise Lost as a whole before he executed it in portions". It is possible, though more difficult, to make a similar assumption about Shakespeare's histories, seeing them as parts, not merely of an historical sequence, but of a mythic cycle. Opposed to any such holistic approach is the atomistic one which breaks the sequence down into individual plays, or even into individual scenes by various hands. Kristian Smidt tends towards the second approach, rejecting the notion of an ideology based on the "Tudor myth" in favour of two imperfect tetralogies, based on the fortunes of York and Lancaster respectively. His book is concerned with textual criticism, but it largely avoids the massive language of quartos, foul papers and compositors with names like "A" and "B".

Within the individual plays, Smidt finds numerous "unconformities", a rather clumsy geological term here signifying inconsistencies, or expectations left unfulfilled. Tentatively explaining these, he rejects multiple authorship, finding instead "changes of mind, new inspiration, fusion of old and new material, reliance on sources, excision, addition, revision, and, in minor things, carelessness".

A collision of diverse sources, for example, is used to explain the decreasing prominence in *Richard II* given to the murder of Gloucester. Shakespeare began the play intending a revenge-tragedy based on the popular *Woodstock*, but was deflected by Holinshed into emphasizing Richard's martyrdom over his criminality. There correspondingly arises an ambivalence towards Bolingbroke at some points, an apparent instrument of heavenly retribution, at others a Machiavellian self-seeker.

In *Henry VI, Part I*, Smidt finds that the two themes, of war in France and warring lords in England, are unconsciously blended. He supports the theory of a juvenile "Talbot play" which, having once discarded, Shakespeare revised after writing parts 2 and 3 of *Henry VI*, adding such things as Suffolk's wooing of Margaret, and York's quarrel with Somerset. This is used to explain the sequential arrival of three messengers in the first scene. The first two messengers bring the same news from France, but the former also reassures the lords for their factious fighting, he is, says Smidt, an interpolation.

The most radical suggestions concern the Falstaff scenes in the *Henry IV* plays. Why, in *Henry IV, Part 2*, is Falstaff recruiting from Justice, Shallow in Gloucestershire, when he is supposedly heading for battle in Yorkshire? According to Smidt, he is really on his way to the Shrewsbury battle of *Henry IV, Part 1*: the scene originally belonged to a unitary *Henry IV*, which Shakespeare bifurcated when Falstaff started getting out of hand. It is a rather clumsy expansion of the original scene which supposedly leads Falstaff to choose, his four soldiers leave for dinner and return asking "which man shall I have?" On the other hand, Falstaff might simply be aware that, while he has been eating Shallow's food, Bardolph has been taking bribes from Shallow's conscripts. Or he might be drunk.

That there are fractures within these plays, as set out by Smidt, is undeniable. But their most profound speeches all point towards a guiding myth of fall and redemption. In the play which commences the cycle, it seems more than fortuitous that the dying Gaunt should speak of himself as "A prophet now inspired", and of his country as "This other Eden" which "Hath made a shameful conquest of itself".